Memoirs Of Extraordinary Popular Delusions, Volume 1

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CHARLES MACKAY

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Memoirs Of Extraordinary Popular Delusions, Volume 1

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MEMOIRS

OF

EXTRAORDINARY

POPULAR DELUSIONS.

BY CHARLES MACKAY,

AUTHOR OF

"THE THAMES AND ITS TRIBUTARIES," "THE HOPE OF THE WORLD," ETC.

"Il est bon de connaître les délires de l'esprit humain. Chaque peuple a ses folies plus ou moins grossières."—MILLOT.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:

LINDSAY AND BLAKISTON.

1850.

2Y.2/5.2/3

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Mrs. E. D. Brandegee
Nov. 9, 1908

2 vols

PHILADELPHIA:

C. SHERMAN, PRINTER.

PREFACE.

THE object of the Author in the following pages has been to collect the most remarkable instances of those moral epidemics which have been excited, sometimes by one cause and sometimes by another, and to show how easily the masses have been led astray, and how imitative and gregarious men are, even in their infatuations and crimes.

Some of the subjects introduced may be familiar to the reader; but the Author hopes that sufficient novelty of detail will be found even in these, to render them acceptable, while they could not be wholly omitted in justice to the subject of which it was proposed to treat. The memoirs of the South Sea madness and the Mississippi delusion are more com-

plete and copious than are to be found elsewhere; and the same may be said of the history of the Witch Mania, which contains an account of its terrific progress in Germany, a part of the subject which has been left comparatively untouched by Sir Walter Scott, in his "Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft," the most important that have yet appeared on this fearful but most interesting subject.

Popular delusions began so early, spread so widely, and have lasted so long, that instead of two or three volumes, fifty would scarcely suffice to detail their history. The present may be considered more of a miscellany of delusions than a history,—a chapter only in the great and awful book of human folly which yet remains to be written, and which Porson once jestingly said he would write in five hundred volumes! Interspersed are sketches of some lighter matters,—amusing instances of the imitativeness and wrongheadedness of the people, rather than examples of folly and delusion.

Religious manias have been purposely excluded as incompatible with the limits prescribed to the present work;—a mere list of them would alone be sufficient to occupy a volume.

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NATIONAL DELUSIONS.

N'en déplaise à ces fous nommés sages de Grèce;
En ce monde il n'est point de parfaite sagesse;
Tous les hommes sont fous, et malgré tous leurs soins,
Ne diffèrent entre eux que du plus ou du moins.

BOILEAU.

IN reading the history of nations, we find that, like individuals, they have their whims and their peculiarities; their seasons of excitement and recklessness, when they care not what they do. We find that whole communities suddenly fix their minds upon one object, and go mad in its pursuit; that millions of people become simultaneously impressed with one delusion, and run after it, till their attention is caught by some new folly more captivating than the first. We see one nation suddenly seized, from its highest to its lowest members, with a fierce desire of military glory; another as suddenly becoming crazed upon a religious scruple, and neither of them recovering its senses until it has shed rivers of blood and sowed a harvest of groans and tears, to be reaped by its posterity. At an early age in the annals of Europe its population lost their wits about the Sepulchre of Jesus, and crowded in frenzied multitudes to the Holy Land: another age went mad for fear of the Devil, and offered up hundreds of thousands of victims to the delusion of witchcraft. At another time, the many became crazed on the subject of the Philosopher's Stone, and committed follies till then unheard of in the pursuit. It was once thought a venial offence in very many countries of Europe to destroy an enemy by slow poison. Persons who would have revolted at the idea of stabbing

a man to the heart, drugged his pottage without scruple. Ladies of gentle birth and manners caught the contagion of murder, until poisoning, under their auspices, became quite fashionable. Some delusions, though notorious to all the world, have subsisted for ages, flourishing as widely among civilized and polished nations as among the early barbarians with whom they originated,—that of duelling, for instance, and the belief in omens and divination of the future, which seem to defy the progress of knowledge to eradicate entirely from the popular mind. Money, again, has often been a cause of the delusion of multitudes. Sober nations have all at once become desperate gamblers, and risked almost their existence upon the turn of a piece of paper. To trace the history of the most prominent of these delusions is the object of the present pages. Men, it has been well said, think in herds; it will be seen that they go mad in herds, while they only recover their senses slowly, and one by one.

In the present state of civilization, society has often shown itself very prone to run a career of folly from the last-mentioned cause. This infatuation has seized upon whole nations in a most extraordinary manner. France, with her Mississippi madness, set the first great example, and was very soon imitated by England with her South Sea Bubble. At an earlier period, Holland made herself still more ridiculous in the eyes of the world, by the frenzy which came over her people for the love of Tulips. Melancholy as all these delusions were in their ultimate results, their history is most amusing. A more ludicrous and yet painful spectacle, than that which Holland presented in the years 1635 and 1636, or France in 1719 and 1720, can hardly be imagined. Taking them in the order of their importance, we shall commence our history with John Law and the famous Mississippi Scheme of the years above mentioned.

THE MISSISSIPPI SCHEME.

Some in clandestine companies combine;
Erect new stocks to trade beyond the line;
With air and empty names beguile the town,
And raise new credits first, then cry 'em down;
Divide the empty nothing into shares,
And set the crowd together by the ears.

DEFOE.

THE personal character and career of one man are so intimately connected with the great scheme of the years 1719 and 1720, that a history of the Mississippi madness can have no fitter introduction than a sketch of the life of its great author, John Law. Historians are divided in opinion as to whether they should designate him a knave or a madman. Both epithets were unsparingly applied to him in his lifetime, and while the unhappy consequences of his projects were still deeply felt. Posterity, however, has found reason to doubt the justice of the accusation, and to confess that John Law was neither knave nor madman, but one more deceived than deceiving; more sinned against than sinning. He was thoroughly acquainted with the philosophy and true principles of credit. He understood the pecuniary question better than any man of his day; and if his system fell with a crash so tremendous, it was not so much his fault as that of the people amongst whom he had erected it. He did not calculate upon the avaricious frenzy of a whole nation; he did not see that confidence, like mistrust, could be increased, almost *ad infinitum*, and that hope was as extravagant as fear. How was he to foretell that the French people, like the man in the fable, would kill in their frantic eagerness, the fine goose he had brought to lay them so many golden eggs? His fate was like that which may be supposed

to have overtaken the first adventurous boatman who rowed from Erie to Ontario. Broad and smooth was the river on which he embarked; rapid and pleasant was his progress; and who was to stay him in his career? Alas for him! the cataract was nigh. He saw, when it was too late, that the tide which wafted him so joyously along was a tide of destruction; and when he endeavoured to retrace his way, he found that the current was too strong for his weak efforts to stem, and that he drew nearer every instant to the tremendous falls. Down he went over the sharp rocks, and the waters with him. *He* was dashed to pieces with his bark, but the waters, maddened and turned to foam by the rough descent, only boiled and bubbled for a time, and then flowed on again as smoothly as ever. Just so it was with Law and the French people. He was the boatman and they were the waters.

John Law was born at Edinburgh in the year 1671. His father was the younger son of an ancient family in Fife, and carried on the business of a goldsmith and banker. He amassed considerable wealth in his trade, sufficient to enable him to gratify the wish, so common among his countrymen, of adding a territorial designation to his name. He purchased with this view the estates of Lauriston and Randleston, on the Frith of Forth, on the borders of West and Mid Lothian, and was thenceforth known as Law of Lauriston. The subject of our memoir, being the eldest son, was received into his father's counting-house at the age of fourteen, and for three years laboured hard to acquire an insight into the principles of banking, as then carried on in Scotland. He had always manifested great love for the study of numbers, and his proficiency in the mathematics was considered extraordinary in one of his tender years. At the age of seventeen he was tall, strong, and well made; and his face, although deeply scarred with the small-pox, was agreeable in its expression, and full of intelligence. At this time he began to neglect his business, and becoming vain of his person, indulged in considerable extravagance of attire. He was a great favourite with the ladies, by whom he was called Beau Law, while the other sex, despising his foppery, nicknamed him Jessamy John. At the death of his father, which happened in 1688, he withdrew entirely from the desk, which had become so

irksome, and being possessed of the revenues of the paternal estate of Lauriston, he proceeded to London, to see the world.

He was now very young, very vain, good-looking, tolerably rich, and quite uncontrolled. It is no wonder that, on his arrival in the capital, he should launch out into extravagance. He soon became a regular frequenter of the gaming-houses, and by pursuing a certain plan, based upon some abstruse calculation of chances, he contrived to gain considerable sums. All the gamblers envied him his luck, and many made it a point to watch his play, and stake their money on the same chances. In affairs of gallantry he was equally fortunate; ladies of the first rank smiled graciously upon the handsome Scotchman—the young, the rich, the witty, and the obliging. But all these successes only paved the way for reverses. After he had been for nine years exposed to the dangerous attractions of the gay life he was leading, he became an irrecoverable gambler. As his love of play increased in violence, it diminished in prudence. Great losses were only to be repaired by still greater ventures, and one unhappy day he lost more than he could repay without mortgaging his family estate. To that step he was driven at last. At the same time his gallantry brought him into trouble. A love affair, or slight flirtation, with a lady of the name of Villiers,* exposed him to the resentment of a Mr. Wilson, by whom he was challenged to fight a duel. Law accepted, and had the ill fortune to shoot his antagonist dead upon the spot. He was arrested the same day, and brought to trial for murder by the relatives of Mr. Wilson. He was afterwards found guilty, and sentenced to death. The sentence was commuted to a fine, upon the ground that the offence only amounted to manslaughter. An appeal being lodged by a brother of the deceased, Law was detained in the King's Bench, whence, by some means or other, which he never explained, he contrived to escape; and an action being instituted against the sheriffs, he was advertised in the Gazette, and a reward offered for his apprehension. He was described as "Captain John Law, a Scotchman, aged twenty-six; a very tall, black, lean man; well shaped, above six feet high, with large pock-holes in his face; big-nosed, and speaking broad and loud." As this was

* Miss Elizabeth Villiers, afterwards Countess of Orkney.

rather a caricature than a description of him, it has been supposed that it was drawn up with a view to favour his escape. He succeeded in reaching the Continent, where he travelled for three years, and devoted much of his attention to the pecuniary and banking affairs of the countries through which he passed. He stayed a few months in Amsterdam, and speculated to some extent in the funds. His mornings were devoted to the study of finance and the principles of trade, and his evenings to the gaming-house. It is generally believed that he returned to Edinburgh in the year 1700. It is certain that he published in that city his "Proposals and Reasons for constituting a Council of Trade." This pamphlet did not excite much attention.

In a short time afterwards he published a project for establishing what he called a Land-bank,* the notes issued by which were never to exceed the value of the entire lands of the state, upon ordinary interest, or were to be equal in value to the land, with the right to enter into possession at a certain time. The project excited a good deal of discussion in the Scottish Parliament, and a motion for the establishment of such a bank was brought forward by a neutral party, called the Squadrone, whom Law had interested in his favour. The Parliament ultimately passed a resolution to the effect, that, to establish any kind of paper credit, so as to force it to pass, was an improper expedient for the nation.

Upon the failure of this project, and of his efforts to procure a pardon for the murder of Mr. Wilson, Law withdrew to the Continent, and resumed his old habits of gaming. For fourteen years he continued to roam about, in Flanders, Holland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and France. He soon became intimately acquainted with the extent of the trade and resources of each, and daily more confirmed in his opinion that no country could prosper without a paper currency. During the whole of this time he appears to have chiefly supported himself by successful play. At every gambling-house of note in the capitals of Europe, he was known and appreciated as one better skilled in the intricacies of chance than any other man of the day. It is stated in the *Biographie*

* The wits of the day called it a *sand-bank*, which would wreck the vessel of the state.

Universelle that he was expelled, first from Venice, and afterwards from Genoa, by the magistrates, who thought him a visiter too dangerous for the youth of those cities. During his residence in Paris he rendered himself obnoxious to D'Argenson, the lieutenant-general of the police, by whom he was ordered to quit the capital. This did not take place, however, before he had made the acquaintance in the saloons, of the Duke de Vendôme, the Prince de Conti, and of the gay Duke of Orleans, the latter of whom was destined afterwards to exercise so much influence over his fate. The Duke of Orleans was pleased with the vivacity and good sense of the Scottish adventurer, while the latter was no less pleased with the wit and amiability of a prince who promised to become his patron. They were often thrown into each other's society, and Law seized every opportunity to instil his financial doctrines into the mind of one whose proximity to the throne pointed him out as destined, at no very distant date, to play an important part in the government.

Shortly before the death of Louis XIV., or, as some say, in 1708, Law proposed a scheme of finance to Desmarets, the Comptroller. Louis is reported to have inquired whether the projector were a Catholic, and, on being answered in the negative, to have declined having anything to do with him.*

It was after this repulse that he visited Italy. His mind being still occupied with schemes of finance, he proposed to Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, to establish his land-bank in that country. The Duke replied that his dominions were too circumscribed for the execution of so great a project, and that he was by far too poor a potentate to be ruined. He advised him, however, to try the King of France once more; for he was sure, if he knew anything of the French character, that the people would be delighted with a plan, not only so new, but so plausible.

Louis XIV. died in 1715, and the heir to the throne being

* This anecdote, which is related in the correspondence of Madame de Bavière, Duchess of Orleans, and mother of the Regent, is discredited by Lord John Russell, in his "History of the principal States of Europe, from the Peace of Utrecht;" for what reason he does not inform us. There is no doubt that Law proposed his scheme to Desmarets, and that Louis refused to hear of it. The reason given for the refusal is quite consistent with the character of that bigoted and tyrannical monarch.

an infant only seven years of age, the Duke of Orleans assumed the reins of government, as Regent, during his minority. Law now found himself in a more favourable position. The tide in his affairs had come, which, taken at the flood, was to waft him on to fortune. The Regent was his friend, already acquainted with his theory and pretensions, and inclined, moreover, to aid him in any efforts to restore the wounded credit of France, bowed down to the earth by the extravagance of the long reign of Louis XIV.

Hardly was that monarch laid in his grave ere the popular hatred, suppressed so long, burst forth against his memory. He who, during his life, had been flattered with an excess of adulation, to which history scarcely offers a parallel, was now cursed as a tyrant, a bigot, and a plunderer. His statues were pelted and disfigured; his effigies torn down, amid the execrations of the populace, and his name rendered synonymous with selfishness and oppression. The glory of his arms was forgotten, and nothing was remembered but his reverses, his extravagance, and his cruelty.

The finances of the country were in a state of the utmost disorder. A profuse and corrupt monarch, whose profuseness and corruption were imitated by almost every functionary, from the highest to the lowest grade, had brought France to the verge of ruin. The national debt amounted to 3000 millions of livres, the revenue to 145 millions, and the expenditure to 142 millions per annum; leaving only three millions to pay the interest upon 3000 millions. The first care of the Regent was to discover a remedy for an evil of such magnitude, and a council was early summoned to take the matter into consideration. The Duke de St. Simon was of opinion that nothing could save the country from revolution but a remedy at once bold and dangerous. He advised the Regent to convoke the States-General, and declare a national bankruptcy. The Duke de Noailles, a man of accommodating principles, an accomplished courtier, and totally averse from giving himself any trouble or annoyance that ingenuity could escape from, opposed the project of St. Simon with all his influence. He represented the expedient as alike dishonest and ruinous. The Regent was of the same opinion, and this desperate remedy fell to the ground.

The measures ultimately adopted, though they promised

fair, only aggravated the evil. The first, and most dishonest measure, was of no advantage to the state. A recoinage was ordered, by which the currency was depreciated one-fifth; those who took a thousand pieces of gold or silver to the mint received back an amount of coin of the same nominal value, but only four-fifths of the weight of metal. By this contrivance the treasury gained seventy-two millions of livres, and all the commercial operations of the country were disordered. A trifling diminution of the taxes silenced the clamours of the people, and for the slight present advantage the great prospective evil was forgotten.

A chamber of justice was next instituted, to inquire into the malversations of the loan-contractors and the farmers of the revenues. Tax collectors are never very popular in any country, but those of France at this period deserved all the odium with which they were loaded. As soon as these farmers-general, with all their hosts of subordinate agents, called *maltôtiers*,* were called to account for their misdeeds, the most extravagant joy took possession of the nation. The Chamber of Justice, instituted chiefly for this purpose, was endowed with very extensive powers. It was composed of the presidents and councils of the Parliament, the judges of the Courts of Aid and of Requests, and the officers of the Chamber of Account, under the general presidence of the minister of finance. Informers were encouraged to give evidence against the offenders by the promise of one-fifth part of the fines and confiscations. A tenth of all concealed effects belonging to the guilty was promised to such as should furnish the means of discovering them.

The promulgation of the edict constituting this court caused a degree of consternation among those principally concerned which can only be accounted for on the supposition that their peculation had been enormous. But they met with no sympathy. The proceedings against them justified their terror. The Bastile was soon unable to contain the prisoners that were sent to it, and the gaols all over the country teemed with guilty or suspected persons. An order was issued to all innkeepers and postmasters to refuse horses to such as endeavoured to seek safety in flight; and all persons were for-

* From *maltôte*, an oppressive tax.

bidden, under heavy fines, to harbour them or favour their evasion. Some were condemned to the pillory, others to the galleys, and the least guilty to fine and imprisonment. One only, Samuel Bernard, a rich banker, and farmer-general of a province remote from the capital, was sentenced to death. So great had been the illegal profits of this man,—looked upon as the tyrant and oppressor of his district,—that he offered six millions of livres, or 250,000*l.* sterling, to be allowed to escape.

His bribe was refused, and he suffered the penalty of death. Others, perhaps more guilty, were more fortunate. Confiscation, owing to the concealment of their treasures by the delinquents, often produced less money than a fine. The severity of the government relaxed, and fines, under the denomination of taxes, were indiscriminately levied upon all offenders. But so corrupt was every department of the administration, that the country benefited but little by the sums which thus flowed into the treasury. Courtiers, and courtiers' wives and mistresses, came in for the chief share of the spoils. One contractor had been taxed in proportion to his wealth and guilt, at the sum of twelve millions of livres. The Count * * *, a man of some weight in the government, called upon him, and offered to procure a remission of the fine, if he would give him a hundred thousand crowns. "Vous êtes trop tard, mon ami," replied the financier; "I have already made a bargain with your wife for fifty thousand."*

About a hundred and eighty millions of livres were levied in this manner, of which eighty were applied in payment of the debts contracted by the government. The remainder found its way into the pockets of the courtiers. Madame de Maintenon, writing on this subject, says, "We hear every day of some new grant of the Regent; the people murmur very much at this mode of employing the money taken from the peculators." The people, who, after the first burst of their

* This anecdote is related by M. de la Hode, in his Life of Philippe of Orleans. It would have looked more authentic if he had given the names of the dishonest contractor and the still more dishonest minister. But M. de la Hode's book is liable to the same objection as most of the French memoirs of that and of subsequent periods. It is sufficient with most of them that an anecdote be *ben trovato;* the *vero* is but matter of secondary consideration.

resentment is over, generally express a sympathy for the weak, were indignant that so much severity should be used to so little purpose. They did not see the justice of robbing one set of rogues to fatten another. In a few months all the more guilty had been brought to punishment, and the Chamber of Justice looked for victims in humbler walks of life. Charges of fraud and extortion were brought against tradesmen of good character, in consequence of the great inducements held out to common informers. They were compelled to lay open their affairs before this tribunal in order to establish their innocence. The voice of complaint resounded from every side, and at the expiration of a year the government found it advisable to discontinue further proceedings. The Chamber of Justice was suppressed, and a general amnesty granted to all against whom no charges had yet been preferred.

In the midst of this financial confusion, Law appeared upon the scene. No man felt more deeply than the Regent the deplorable state of the country, but no man could be more averse from putting his shoulders manfully to the wheel. He disliked business; he signed official documents without proper examination, and trusted to others what he should have undertaken himself. The cares inseparable from his high office were burdensome to him; he saw that something was necessary to be done, but he lacked the energy to do it, and had not virtue enough to sacrifice his ease and his pleasures in the attempt. No wonder that, with this character, he listened favourably to the mighty projects, so easy of execution, of the clever adventurer whom he had formerly known, and whose talents he appreciated.

When Law presented himself at court, he was most cordially received. He offered two memorials to the Regent, in which he set forth the evils that had befallen France, owing to an insufficient currency, at different times depreciated. He asserted that a metallic currency, unaided by a paper money, was wholly inadequate to the wants of a commercial country, and particularly cited the examples of Great Britain and Holland to show the advantages of paper. He used many sound arguments on the subject of credit, and proposed, as a means of restoring that of France, then at so low an ebb among the nations, that he should be allowed to set up a bank, which should have the management of the royal revenues, and issue

notes, both on that and on landed security. He further proposed that this bank should be administered in the King's name, but subject to the control of commissioners, to be named by the States-General.

While these memorials were under consideration, Law translated into French his essay on money and trade, and used every means to extend through the nation his renown as a financier. He soon became talked of. The confidants of the Regent spread abroad his praise, and every one expected great things of Monsieur Lass.*

On the 5th of May, 1716, a royal edict was published, by which Law was authorized, in conjunction with his brother, to establish a bank, under the name of Law and Company, the notes of which should be received in payment of the taxes. The capital was fixed at six millions of livres, in twelve thousand shares of five hundred livres each, purchasable one-fourth in specie and the remainder in *billets d'état*. It was not thought expedient to grant him the whole of the privileges prayed for in his memorials until experience should have shown their safety and advantage.

Law was now on the high road to fortune. The study of thirty years was brought to guide him in the management of his bank. He made all his notes payable at sight, and in the coin current at the time they were issued. This last was a master-stroke of policy, and immediately rendered his notes more valuable than the precious metals. The latter were constantly liable to depreciation by the unwise tampering of the government. A thousand livres of silver might be worth their nominal value one day and be reduced one-sixth the next, but a note of Law's bank retained its original value. He publicly declared at the same time that a banker deserved death if he made issues without having sufficient security to answer all demands. The consequence was, that his notes advanced rapidly in public estimation, and were received at one per cent. more than specie. It was not long before the trade of the country felt the benefit. Languishing commerce began to lift up her head; the taxes were paid with greater

* The French pronounced his name in this manner to avoid the ungallic sound, *aw*. After the failure of his scheme, the wags said the nation was *lasse de lui*, and proposed that he should in future be known by the name of Monsieur H*elas!*

regularity and less murmuring, and a degree of confidence was established that could not fail, if it continued, to become still more advantageous. In the course of a year Law's notes rose to fifteen per cent. premium, while the *billets d'état*, or notes issued by the government, as security for the debts contracted by the extravagant Louis XIV., were at a discount of no less than seventy-eight and a half per cent. The comparison was too great in favour of Law not to attract the attention of the whole kingdom, and his credit extended itself day by day. Branches of his bank were almost simultaneously established at Lyons, Rochelle, Tours, Amiens, and Orleans.

The Regent appears to have been utterly astonished at his success, and gradually to have conceived the idea, that paper, which could so aid a metallic currency, could entirely supersede it. Upon this fundamental error he afterwards acted. In the mean time, Law commenced the famous project which has handed his name down to posterity. He proposed to the Regent, who could refuse him nothing, to establish a company, that should have the exclusive privilege of trading to the great river Mississippi and the province of Louisiana, on its western bank. The country was supposed to abound in the precious metals, and the company, supported by the profits of their exclusive commerce, were to be the sole farmers of the taxes, and sole coiners of money. Letters patent were issued, incorporating the company, in August, 1717. The capital was divided into two hundred thousand shares of five hundred livres each, the whole of which might be paid in *billets d'état*, at their nominal value, although worth no more than 160 livres in the market.

It was now that the frenzy of speculating began to seize upon the nation. Law's bank had effected so much good, that any promises for the future which he thought proper to make were readily believed. The Regent every day conferred new privileges upon the fortunate projector. The bank obtained the monopoly of the sale of tobacco; the sole right of the refinage of gold and silver, and was finally erected into the Royal Bank of France. Amid the intoxication of success, both Law and the Regent forgot the maxim so loudly proclaimed by the former, that a banker deserved death who made issues of paper without the necessary funds to provide for them. As soon as the bank, from a private, became a

public institution, the Regent caused a fabrication of notes to the amount of one thousand millions of livres. This was the first departure from sound principles, and one for which Law is not justly blamable. While the affairs of the bank were under his control, the issues had never exceeded sixty millions. Whether Law opposed the inordinate increase is not known, but as it took place as soon as the bank was made a royal establishment, it is but fair to lay the blame of the change of system upon the Regent.

Law found that he lived under a despotic government, but he was not yet aware of the pernicious influence which such a government could exercise upon so delicate a framework as that of credit. He discovered it afterwards to his cost, but in the mean time suffered himself to be impelled by the Regent into courses which his own reason must have disapproved. With a weakness must culpable, he lent his aid in inundating the country with paper money, which, based upon no solid foundation, was sure to fall, sooner or later. The extraordinary present fortune dazzled his eyes, and prevented him from seeing the evil day that would burst over his head, when once, from any cause or other, the alarm was sounded. The Parliament were from the first jealous of his influence as a foreigner, and had, besides, their misgivings as to the safety of his projects. As his influence extended, their animosity increased. D'Aguesseau, the Chancellor, was unceremoniously dismissed by the Regent for his opposition to the vast increase of paper money, and the constant depreciation of the gold and silver coin of the realm. This only served to augment the enmity of the Parliament, and when D'Argenson, a man devoted to the interests of the Regent, was appointed to the vacant chancellorship, and made at the same time Minister of Finance, they became more violent than ever. The first measure of the new minister caused a further depreciation of the coin. In order to extinguish the *billets d'état*, it was ordered that persons bringing to the mint four thousand livres in specie and one thousand livres in *billets d'état*, should receive back coin to the amount of five thousand livres. D'Argenson plumed himself mightily upon thus creating five thousand new and smaller livres out of the four thousand old and larger ones, being too ignorant of the true principles of trade and

credit to be aware of the immense injury he was inflicting upon both.

The Parliament saw at once the impolicy and danger of such a system, and made repeated remonstrances to the Regent. The latter refused to entertain their petitions, when the Parliament, by a bold, and very unusual stretch of authority, commanded that no money should be received in payment but that of the old standard. The Regent summoned a *lit de justice*, and annulled the decree. The Parliament resisted, and issued another. Again the Regent exercised his privilege, and annulled it, till the Parliament, stung to fiercer opposition, passed another decree, dated August 12th, 1718, by which they forbade the bank of Law to have any concern, either direct or indirect, in the administration of the revenue; and prohibited all foreigners, under heavy penalties, from interfering, either in their own names, or in that of others, in the management of the finances of the state. The Parliament considered Law to be the author of all the evil, and some of the counsellors, in the virulence of their enmity, proposed that he should be brought to trial, and, if found guilty, be hung at the gates of the Palace de Justice.

Law, in great alarm fled to the Palais Royal, and threw himself on the protection of the Regent, praying that measures might be taken to reduce the Parliament to obedience. The Regent had nothing so much at heart, both on that account and because of the disputes that had arisen relative to the legitimation of the Duke of Maine and the Count of Thoulouse, the sons of the late King. The Parliament was ultimately overawed by the arrest of their president and two of the counsellors, who were sent to distant prisons.

Thus the first cloud upon Law's prospects blew over: freed from the apprehension of personal danger, he devoted his attention to his famous Mississippi project, the shares of which were rapidly rising in spite of the Parliament. At the commencement of the year 1719 an edict was published, granting to the Mississippi Company the exclusive privilege of trading to the East Indies, China, and the South Seas, and to all the possessions of the French East India Company, established by Colbert. The Company, in consequence of this great increase of their business, assumed, as more appropriate, the title of Company of the Indies, and created fifty thousand new shares. The

prospects now held out by Law were most magnificent. He promised a yearly dividend of two hundred livres upon each share of five hundred, which, as the shares were paid for in *billets d'état*, at their nominal value, but worth only 100 livres, was at the rate of about 120 per cent. profit.

The public enthusiasm, which had been so long rising, could not resist a vision so splendid. At least three hundred thousand applications were made for the fifty thousand new shares, and Law's house in the Rue de Quincampoix was beset from morning to night by the eager applicants. As it was impossible to satisfy them all, it was several weeks before a list of the fortunate new stockholders could be made out, during which time the public impatience rose to a pitch of frenzy. Dukes, marquises, counts, with their duchesses, marchionesses, and countesses, waited in the streets for hours every day before Mr. Law's door to know the result. At last, to avoid the jostling of the plebeian crowd, which, to the number of thousands, filled the whole thoroughfare, they took apartments in the adjoining houses, that they might be continually near the temple whence the new Plutus was diffusing wealth. Every day the value of the old shares increased, and the fresh applications, induced by the golden dreams of the whole nation, became so numerous that it was deemed advisable to create no less than three hundred thousand new shares at five thousand livres each, in order that the Regent might take advantage of the popular enthusiasm to pay off the national debt. For this purpose, the sum of fifteen hundred millions of livres was necessary. Such was the eagerness of the nation, that thrice the sum would have been subscribed if the government had authorized it.

Law was now at the zenith of his prosperity, and the people were rapidly approaching the zenith of their infatuation. The highest and the lowest classes were alike filled with a vision of boundless wealth. There was not a person of note among the aristocracy, with the exception of the Duke of St. Simon and Marshal Villars, who was not engaged in buying or selling stock. People of every age and sex, and condition in life, speculated in the rise and fall of the Mississippi bonds. The Rue de Quincampoix was the grand resort of the jobbers, and it being a narrow, inconvenient street, accidents continually occurred in it, from the tremendous pressure of

the crowd. Houses in it, worth, in ordinary times, a thousand livres of yearly rent, yielded as much as twelve or sixteen thousand. A cobbler, who had a stall in it, gained about two hundred livres a day by letting it out, and furnishing writing materials to brokers and their clients. The story goes, that a humpbacked man who stood in the street gained considerable sums by lending his hump as a writing desk to the eager spectators! The great concourse of persons who assembled to do business brought a still greater concourse of spectators. These again drew all the thieves and immoral characters of Paris to the spot, and constant riots and disturbances took place. At nightfall, it was often found necessary to send a troop of soldiers to clear the street.

Law, finding the inconvenience of his residence, removed to the Place Vendôme, whither the crowd of *agioteurs* followed him. That spacious square soon became as thronged as the Rue de Quincampoix: from morning to night it presented the appearance of a fair. Booths and tents were erected for the transaction of business and the sale of refreshments, and gamblers with their roulette tables stationed themselves in the very middle of the place, and reaped a golden, or rather a paper, harvest from the throng. The Boulevards and public gardens were forsaken; parties of pleasure took their walks in preference in the Place Vendôme, which became the fashionable lounge of the idle, as well as the general rendezvous of the busy. The noise was so great all day, that the Chancellor, whose court was situated in the square, complained to the Regent and the municipality, that he could not hear the advocates. Law, when applied to, expressed his willingness to aid in the removal of the nuisance, and for this purpose entered into a treaty with the Prince de Carignan for the Hôtel de Soissons, which had a garden of several acres in the rear. A bargain was concluded, by which Law became the purchaser of the hotel, at an enormous price, the Prince reserving to himself the magnificent gardens as a new source of profit. They contained some fine statues and several fountains, and were altogether laid out with much taste. As soon as Law was installed in his new abode, an edict was published, forbidding all persons to buy or sell stock anywhere but in the gardens of the Hôtel de Soissons. In the midst among the trees, about five hundred small tents and pavilions were

erected, for the convenience of the stock-jobbers. Their various colours, the gay ribands and banners which floated from them, the busy crowds which passed continually in and out—the incessant hum of voices, the noise, the music, and the strange mixture of business and pleasure on the countenances of the throng, all combined to give the place an air of enchantment that quite enraptured the Parisians. The Prince de Carignan made enormous profits while the delusion lasted. Each tent was let at the rate of five hundred livres a month; and, as there were at least five hundred of them, his monthly revenue from this source alone must have amounted to 250,000 livres, or upwards of 10,000*l.* sterling.

The honest old soldier, Marshal Villars, was so vexed to see the folly which had smitten his countrymen, that he never could speak with temper on the subject. Passing one day through the Place Vendôme in his carriage, the choleric gentleman was so annoyed at the infatuation of the people, that he abruptly ordered his coachman to stop, and, putting his head out of the carriage window, harangued them for full half an hour on their "disgusting avarice." This was not a very wise proceeding on his part. Hisses and shouts of laughter resounded from every side, and jokes without number were aimed at him. There being at last strong symptoms that something more tangible was flying through the air in the direction of his head, the Marshal was glad to drive on. He never again repeated the experiment.

Two sober, quiet, and philosophic men of letters, M. de la Motte and the Abbé Terrason, congratulated each other, that they, at least, were free from this strange infatuation. A few days afterwards, as the worthy Abbé was coming out of the Hôtel de Soissons, whither he had gone to buy shares in the Mississippi, whom should he see but his friend La Motte entering for the same purpose. "Ha!" said the Abbé, smiling, "is that *you?*" "Yes," said La Motte, pushing past as fast as he was able; "and can that be *you?*" The next time the two scholars met, they talked of philosophy, of science, and of religion, but neither had courage for a long time to breathe one syllable about the Mississippi. At last, when it was mentioned, they agreed that a man ought never to swear against his doing any one thing, and that there was no sort of extravagance of which even a wise man was not capable.

During this time, Law, the new Plutus, had become all at once the most important personage of the state. The ante-chambers of the Regent were forsaken by the courtiers. Peers, judges, and bishops thronged to the Hôtel de Soissons; officers of the army and navy, ladies of title and fashion, and every one to whom hereditary rank or public employ gave a claim to precedence, were to be found waiting in his ante-chambers to beg for a portion of his India stock. Law was so pestered that he was unable to see one-tenth part of the applicants, and every manœuvre that ingenuity could suggest was employed to gain access to him. Peers, whose dignity would have been outraged if the Regent had made them wait half an hour for an interview, were content to wait six hours for the chance of seeing Monsieur Law. Enormous fees were paid to his servants, if they would merely announce their names. Ladies of rank employed the blandishments of their smiles for the same object; but many of them came day after day for a fortnight before they could obtain an audience. When Law accepted an invitation, he was sometimes so surrounded by ladies, all asking to have their names put down in his lists as shareholders in the new stock, that, in spite of his well-known and habitual gallantry, he was obliged to tear himself away *par force*. The most ludicrous stratagems were employed to have an opportunity of speaking to him. One lady, who had striven in vain during several days, gave up in despair all attempts to see him at his own house, but ordered her coachman to keep a strict watch whenever she was out in her carriage, and if he saw Mr. Law coming, to drive against a post, and upset her. The coachman promised obedience, and for three days the lady was driven incessantly through the town, praying inwardly for the opportunity to be overturned. At last she espied Mr. Law, and, pulling the string, called out to the coachman, "Upset us now! for God's sake, upset us now!" The coachman drove against a post, the lady screamed, the coach was overturned, and Law, who had seen the *accident*, hastened to the spot to render assistance. The cunning dame was led into the Hôtel de Soissons, where she soon thought it advisable to recover from her fright, and, after apologizing to Mr. Law, confessed her stratagem. Law smiled, and entered the lady in his books as the purchaser of a quantity of India stock. Another story

is told of a Madame de Boucha, who, knowing that Mr. Law was at dinner at a certain house, proceeded thither in her carriage, and gave the alarm of fire. The company started from table, and Law among the rest; but, seeing one lady making all haste into the house towards him, while everybody else was scampering away, he suspected the trick, and ran off in another direction.

Many other anecdotes are related, which, even though they may be a little exaggerated, are nevertheless worth preserving, as showing the spirit of that singular period.* The Regent was one day mentioning, in the presence of D'Argenson, the Abbé Dubois, and some other persons, that he was desirous of deputing some lady, of the rank at least of a Duchess, to attend upon his daughter at Modena; "but," added he, "I do not exactly know where to find one." "No!" replied one, in affected surprise; "I can tell you where to find every Duchess in France:—you have only to go to Mr. Law's; you will see them every one in his antechamber."

M. de Chirac, a celebrated physician, had bought stock at an unlucky period, and was very anxious to sell out. Stock, however, continued to fall for two or three days, much to his alarm. His mind was filled with the subject, when he was suddenly called upon to attend a lady, who imagined herself unwell. He arrived, was shown up stairs, and felt the lady's pulse. "It falls! it falls! good God! it falls continually!" said he, musingly, while the lady looked up in his face, all anxiety for his opinion. "Oh! M. de Chirac," said she, starting to her feet, and ringing the bell for assistance; "I am dying! I am dying! it falls! it falls!" "What falls?" inquired the doctor, in amazement. "My pulse! my pulse!" said the lady; "I must be dying." "Calm your apprehensions, my dear Madam," said M. de Chirac; "I was speaking of the stocks. The truth is, I have been a great loser, and my mind is so disturbed, I hardly know what I have been saying."

* The curious reader may find an anecdote of the eagerness of the French ladies to retain Law in their company, which will make him blush or smile, according as he happens to be very modest or the reverse. It is related in the Letters of Madame Charlotte Elizabeth de Bavière, Duchess of Orleans, vol. ii. p. 274.

The price of shares sometimes rose ten or twenty per cent. in the course of a few hours, and many persons in the humbler walks of life, who had risen poor in the morning, went to bed in affluence. An extensive holder of stock, being taken ill, sent his servant to sell two hundred and fifty shares, at eight thousand livres each, the price at which they were then quoted. The servant went, and, on his arrival in the Jardin de Soissons, found that in the interval the price had risen to ten thousand livres. The difference of two thousand livres on the two hundred and fifty shares, amounting to 500,000 livres, or 20,000*l.* sterling, he very coolly transferred to his own use, and, giving the remainder to his master, set out the same evening for another country. Law's coachman in a very short time made money enough to set up a carriage of his own, and requested permission to leave his service. Law, who esteemed the man, begged of him as a favour, that he would endeavour, before he went, to find a substitute as good as himself. The coachman consented, and in the evening brought two of his former comrades, telling Mr. Law to choose between them, and he would take the other. Cook-maids and footmen were now and then as lucky, and, in the full-blown pride of their easily-acquired wealth, made the most ridiculous mistakes. Preserving the language and manners of their old, with the finery of their new station, they afforded continual subjects for the pity of the sensible, the contempt of the sober, and the laughter of everybody. But the folly and meanness of the higher ranks of society were still more disgusting. One instance alone, related by the Duke de St. Simon, will show the unworthy avarice which infected the whole of society. A man of the name of André, without character or education, had, by a series of well-timed speculations in Mississippi bonds, gained enormous wealth, in an incredibly short space of time. As St. Simon expresses it, "he had amassed mountains of gold." As he became rich, he grew ashamed of the lowness of his birth, and anxious above all things to be allied to nobility. He had a daughter, an infant only three years of age, and he opened a negotiation with the aristocratic and needy family of D'Oyse, that this child should, upon certain conditions, marry a member of that house. The Marquis d'Oyse, to his shame, consented, and promised to marry her himself on her attaining the age

of twelve, if the father would pay him down the sum of a hundred thousand crowns, and twenty thousand livres every year, until the celebration of the marriage. The Marquis was himself in his thirty-third year. This scandalous bargain was duly signed and sealed, the stockjobber furthermore agreeing to settle upon his daughter, on the marriage-day, a fortune of several millions. The Duke of Brancas, the head of the family, was present throughout the negotiation, and shared in all the profits. St. Simon, who treats the matter with the levity becoming what he thought so good a joke, adds, "that people did not spare their animadversions on this beautiful marriage," and further informs us, "that the project fell to the ground some months afterwards by the overthrow of Law, and the ruin of the ambitious Monsieur André." It would appear, however, that the noble family never had the honesty to return the hundred thousand crowns.

Amid events like these, which, humiliating though they be, partake largely of the ludicrous, others occurred of a more serious nature. Robberies in the streets were of daily occurrence, in consequence of the immense sums, in paper, which people carried about with them. Assassinations were also frequent. One case in particular fixed the attention of the whole of France, not only on account of the enormity of the offence, but of the rank and high connexions of the criminal.

The Count d'Horn, a younger brother of the Prince d'Horn, and related to the noble families of D'Aremberg, De Ligne, and De Montmorency, was a young man of dissipated character, extravagant to a degree, and unprincipled as he was extravagant. In connexion with two other young men as reckless as himself, named Mille, a Piedmontese captain, and one Destampes, or Lestang, a Fleming, he formed a design to rob a very rich broker, who was known, unfortunately for himself, to carry great sums about his person. The Count pretended a desire to purchase of him a number of shares in the Company of the Indies, and for that purpose appointed to meet him in a *cabaret*, or low public house, in the neighbourhood of the Place Vendôme. The unsuspecting broker was punctual to his appointment; so were the Count d'Horn and his two associates, whom he introduced as his particular friends. After a few moments' conversation, the Count

d'Horn suddenly sprang upon his victim, and stabbed him three times in the breast with a poniard. The man fell heavily to the ground, and, while the Count was employed in rifling his portfolio of bonds in the Mississippi and Indian schemes, to the amount of one hundred thousand crowns, Mille, the Piedmontese, stabbed the unfortunate broker again and again, to make sure of his death. But the broker did not fall without a struggle, and his cries brought the people of the *cabaret* to his assistance. Lestang, the other assassin, who had been set to keep watch at a staircase, sprang from a window and escaped; but Mille and the Count d'Horn were seized in the very act.

This crime, committed in open day, and in so public a place as a *cabaret*, filled Paris with consternation. The trial of the assassins commenced on the following day, and the evidence being so clear, they were both found guilty and condemned to be broken alive on the wheel. The noble relatives of the Count d'Horn absolutely blocked up the antechambers of the Regent, praying for mercy on the misguided youth, and alleging that he was insane. The Regent avoided them as long as possible, being determined that, in a case so atrocious, justice should take its course; but the importunity of these influential suitors was not to be overcome so silently, and they at last forced themselves into the presence of the Regent, and prayed him to save their house the shame of a public execution. They hinted that the Princes d'Horn were allied to the illustrious family of Orleans, and added that the Regent himself would be disgraced if a kinsman of his should die by the hands of a common executioner. The Regent, to his credit, was proof against all their solicitations, and replied to their last argument in the words of Corneille,—

"Le crime fait la honte, et non pas l'échafaud:"

adding, that whatever shame there might be in the punishment he would very willingly share with the other relatives. Day after day they renewed their entreaties, but always with the same result. At last they thought that if they could interest the Duke de St. Simon in their favour, a man for whom the Regent felt sincere esteem, they might succeed in their object. The Duke, a thorough aristocrat, was as shocked as they were, that a noble assassin should die by the same

death as a plebeian felon, and represented to the Regent the impolicy of making enemies of so numerous, wealthy, and powerful a family. He urged, too, that in Germany, where the family of D'Aremberg had large possessions, it was the law, that no relative of a person broken on the wheel could succeed to any public office or employ until a whole generation had passed away. For this reason he thought the punishment of the guilty Count might be transmuted into beheading, which was considered all over Europe as much less infamous. The Regent was moved by this argument, and was about to consent, when Law, who felt peculiarly interested in the fate of the murdered man, confirmed him in his former resolution, to let the law take its course.

The relatives of D'Horn were now reduced to the last extremity. The Prince de Robec Montmorency, despairing of other methods, found means to penetrate into the dungeon of the criminal, and offering him a cup of poison, implored him to save them from disgrace. The Count d'Horn turned away his head, and refused to take it. Montmorency pressed him once more, and losing all patience at his continued refusal, turned on his heel, and exclaiming, "Die, then, as thou wilt, mean-spirited wretch! thou art fit only to perish by the hands of the hangman!" left him to his fate.

D'Horn himself petitioned the Regent that he might be beheaded, but Law, who exercised more influence over his mind than any other person, with the exception of the notorious Abbé Dubois, his tutor, insisted that he could not in justice succumb to the self-interested views of the D'Horns. The Regent had from the first been of the same opinion, and within six days after the commission of their crime, D'Horn and Mille were broken on the wheel, in the Place de Grève. The other assassin, Lestang, was never apprehended.

This prompt and severe justice was highly pleasing to the populace of Paris; even M. de Quincampoix, as they called Law, came in for a share of their approbation for having induced the Regent to show no favour to a patrician. But the number of robberies and assassinations did not diminish. No sympathy was shown for rich jobbers when they were plundered: the general laxity of public morals, conspicuous enough before, was rendered still more so by its rapid pervasion of the middle classes, who had hitherto remained com-

paratively pure, between the open vices of the class above and the hidden crimes of the class below them. The pernicious love of gambling diffused itself through society, and bore all public, and nearly all private, virtue before it.

For a time, while confidence lasted, an impetus was given to trade, which could not fail to be beneficial. In Paris, especially, the good results were felt. Strangers flocked into the capital from every part, bent, not only upon making money, but on spending it. The Duchess of Orleans, mother of the Regent, computes the increase of the population during this time, from the great influx of strangers from all parts of the world, at 305,000 souls. The housekeepers were obliged to make up beds in garrets, kitchens, and even stables, for the accommodation of lodgers; and the town was so full of carriages and vehicles of every description, that they were obliged in the principal streets to drive at a foot-pace for fear of accidents. The looms of the country worked with unusual activity, to supply rich laces, silks, broadcloth, and velvets, which being paid for in abundant paper, increased in price fourfold. Provisions shared the general advance; bread, meat, and vegetables were sold at prices greater than had ever before been known; while the wages of labour rose in exactly the same proportion. The artisan, who formerly gained fifteen sous per diem, now gained sixty. New houses were built in every direction; an illusory prosperity shone over the land, and so dazzled the eyes of the whole nation that none could see the dark cloud on the horizon, announcing the storm that was too rapidly approaching.

Law himself, the magician whose wand had wrought so surprising a change, shared, of course, in the general prosperity. His wife and daughter were courted by the highest nobility, and their alliance sought by the heirs of ducal and princely houses. He bought two splendid estates in different parts of France, and entered into a negotiation with the family of the Duke de Sully for the purchase of the Marquisate of Rosny. His religion being an obstacle to his advancement, the Regent promised, if he would publicly conform to the Catholic faith, to make him Comptroller-General of the Finances. Law, who had no more real religion than any other professed gambler, readily agreed, and was confirmed by the Abbé de Tencin, in the cathedral of Melun,

in presence of a great crowd of spectators.* On the following day he was elected honorary churchwarden of the parish of St. Roch, upon which occasion he made it a present of the sum of five hundred thousand livres. His charities, always magnificent, were not always so ostentatious. He gave away great sums privately, and no tale of real distress ever reached his ears in vain.

At this time, he was by far the most influential person of the state. The Duke of Orleans had so much confidence in his sagacity, and the success of his plans, that he always consulted him upon every matter of moment. He was by no means unduly elevated by his prosperity, but remained the same simple, affable, sensible man that he had shown himself in adversity. His gallantry, which was always delightful to the fair objects of it, was of a nature, so kind, so gentlemanly, and so respectful, that not even a lover could have taken offence at it. If upon any occasion he showed any symptoms of haughtiness, it was to the cringing nobles, who lavished their adulation upon him till it became fulsome. He often took pleasure in seeing how long he could make them dance attendance upon him for a single favour. To such of his own countrymen as by chance visited Paris, and sought an interview with him, he was, on the contrary, all politeness and attention. When Archibald Campbell, Earl of Islay, and afterwards Duke of Argyle, called upon him in the Place Vendôme, he had to pass through an antechamber crowded with persons of the first distinction, all anxious to see the great financier, and have their names put down as first on the list of some new subscription. Law himself was quietly sitting in his library, writing a letter to the gardener at his paternal estate of Lauriston about the planting of some cabbages! The Earl stayed for a considerable time, played a

* The following squib was circulated on the occasion:—

"Foin de ton zèle séraphique,
Malheureux Abbé de Tencin,
Depuis que Law est Catholique,
Tout le royaume est Capucin!"

Thus, somewhat weakly and paraphrastically rendered by Justansond, in his translation of the "Memoirs of Louis XV:"—

"Tencin, a curse on thy seraphic zeal,
Which by persuasion hath contrived the means
To make the Scotchman at our altars kneel,
Since which we all are poor as Capucines!"

game of piquet with his countryman, and left him, charmed with his ease, good sense, and good breeding.

Among the nobles who, by means of the public credulity at this time, gained sums sufficient to repair their ruined fortunes, may be mentioned the names of the Dukes de Bourbon, de Guiche, de la Force,* de Chaulnes, and d'Antin; the Marechal d'Estrées, the Princes de Rohan, de Poix, and de Léon. The Duke de Bourbon, son of Louis XIV. by Madame de Montespan, was peculiarly fortunate in his speculations in Mississippi paper. He rebuilt the royal residence of Chantilly in a style of unwonted magnificence, and, being passionately fond of horses, he erected a range of stables, which were long renowned throughout Europe, and imported a hundred and fifty of the finest racers from England, to improve the breed in France. He bought a large extent of country in Picardy, and became possessed of nearly all the valuable lands lying between the Oise and the Somme.

When fortunes such as these were gained, it is no wonder that Law should have been almost worshipped by the mercurial population. Never was monarch more flattered than he was. All the small poets and *littérateurs* of the day poured floods of adulation upon him. According to them he was the saviour of the country, the tutelary divinity of France; wit was in all his words, goodness in all his looks, and wisdom in all his actions. So great a crowd followed his carriage whenever he went abroad, that the Regent sent him a troop of horse as his permanent escort, to clear the streets before him.

It was remarked at this time, that Paris had never before been so full of objects of elegance and luxury. Statues, pictures, and tapestries were imported in great quantities from foreign countries, and found a ready market. All those pretty trifles in the way of furniture and ornament, which the French excel in manufacturing, were no longer the exclusive playthings of the aristocracy, but were to be found in abundance in the houses of traders and the middle

* The Duke de la Force gained considerable sums, not only by jobbing in the stocks, but in dealing in porcelain, spices, &c. It was debated for a length of time in the Parliament of Paris whether he had not, in his quality of spice-merchant, forfeited his rank in the peerage. It was decided in the negative. A caricature of him was made, dressed as a street porter, carrying a large bale of spices on his back, with the inscription, "Admirez La Force."

classes in general. Jewellery of the most costly description was brought to Paris as the most favourable mart. Among the rest, the famous diamond, bought by the Regent, and called by his name, and which long adorned the crown of France. It was purchased for the sum of two millions of livres, under circumstances which show that the Regent was not so great a gainer as some of his subjects, by the impetus which trade had received. When the diamond was first offered to him, he refused to buy it, although he desired, above all things, to possess it, alleging as his reason, that his duty to the country he governed would not allow him to spend so large a sum of the public money for a mere jewel. This valid and honourable excuse threw all the ladies of the court into alarm, and nothing was heard for some days but expressions of regret, that so rare a gem should be allowed to go out of France; no private individual being rich enough to buy it. The Regent was continually importuned about it; but all in vain, until the Duke de St. Simon, who, with all his ability, was something of a twaddler, undertook the weighty business. His entreaties, being seconded by Law, the good-natured Regent gave his consent, leaving to Law's ingenuity to find the means to pay for it. The owner took security for the payment of the sum of two millions of livres within a stated period, receiving, in the mean time, the interest of five per cent. upon that amount, and being allowed besides, all the valuable clippings of the gem. St. Simon, in his Memoirs, relates, with no little complacency, his share in this transaction. After describing the diamond to be as large as a greengage, of a form nearly round, perfectly white, and without flaw, and weighing more than five hundred grains, he concludes with a chuckle, by telling the world, "that he takes great credit to himself for having induced the Regent to make so illustrious a purchase." In other words, he was proud that he had induced him to sacrifice his duty, and buy a bauble for himself, at an extravagant price, out of the public money.

Thus the system continued to flourish till the commencement of the year 1720. The warnings of the Parliament, that too great a creation of paper money would, sooner or later, bring the country to bankruptcy, were disregarded. The Regent, who knew nothing whatever of the philosophy

of finance, thought that a system which had produced such good effects could never be carried to excess. If five hundred millions of paper had been of such advantage, five hundred millions additional would be of still greater advantage. This was the grand error of the Regent, and which Law did not attempt to dispel. The extraordinary avidity of the people kept up the delusion; and the higher the price of Indian and Mississippi stock, the more *billets de banque* were issued to keep pace with it. The edifice thus reared might not unaptly be compared to the gorgeous palace erected by Potemkin, that princely barbarian of Russia, to surprise and please his imperial mistress: huge blocks of ice were piled one upon another; Ionic pillars, of chastest workmanship, in ice, formed a noble portico; and a dome, of the same material, shone in the sun, which had just strength enough to gild, but not to melt it. It glittered afar, like a palace of crystals and diamonds; but there came one warm breeze from the south, and the stately building dissolved away, till none were able even to gather up the fragments. So with Law and his paper system. No sooner did the breath of popular mistrust blow steadily upon it, than it fell to ruins, and none could raise it up again.

The first slight alarm that was occasioned was early in 1720. The Prince de Conti, offended that Law should have denied him fresh shares in India stock, at his own price, sent to his bank to demand payment in specie of so enormous a quantity of notes, that three wagons were required for its transport. Law complained to the Regent, and urged on his attention the mischief that would be done, if such an example found many imitators. The Regent was but too well aware of it, and, sending for the Prince de Conti, ordered him, under penalty of his high displeasure, to refund to the bank two-thirds of the specie which he had withdrawn from it. The Prince was forced to obey the despotic mandate. Happily for Law's credit, De Conti was an unpopular man: everybody condemned his meanness and cupidity, and agreed that Law had been hardly treated. It is strange, however, that so narrow an escape should not have made both Law and the Regent more anxious to restrict their issues. Others were soon found who imitated, from motives of distrust, the example which had been set by De Conti in revenge. The

more acute stockjobbers imagined justly that prices could not continue to rise for ever. Bourdon and La Richardière, renowned for their extensive operations in the funds, quietly and in small quantities at a time, converted their notes into specie, and sent it away to foreign countries. They also bought as much as they could conveniently carry of plate and expensive jewellery, and sent it secretly away to England or to Holland. Vermalet, a jobber who sniffed the coming storm, procured gold and silver coin to the amount of nearly a million of livres, which he packed in a farmer's cart, and covered over with hay and cow-dung. He then disguised himself in the dirty smock-frock, or *blouse*, of a peasant, and drove his precious load in safety into Belgium. Thence he soon found means to transport it to Amsterdam.

Hitherto no difficulty had been experienced by any class in procuring specie for their wants. But this system could not long be carried on without causing a scarcity. The voice of complaint was heard on every side, and inquiries being instituted, the cause was soon discovered. The council debated long on the remedies to be taken, and Law, being called on for his advice, was of opinion, that an edict should be published, depreciating the value of coin five per cent. below that of paper. The edict was published accordingly; but, failing of its intended effect, was followed by another, in which the depreciation was increased to ten per cent. The payments of the bank were at the same time restricted to one hundred livres in gold, and ten in silver. All these measures were nugatory to restore confidence in the paper, though the restriction of cash payments within limits so extremely narrow kept up the credit of the bank.

Notwithstanding every effort to the contrary, the precious metals continued to be conveyed to England and Holland. The little coin that was left in the country was carefully treasured, or hidden, until the scarcity became so great, that the operations of trade could no longer be carried on. In this emergency, Law hazarded the bold experiment of forbidding the use of specie altogether. In February, 1720, an edict was published, which, instead of restoring the credit of the paper, as was intended, destroyed it irrecoverably, and drove the country to the very brink of revolution. By this famous edict it was forbidden to any person whatever to have more

than 500 livres (20*l.*) of coin in his possession, under pain of a heavy fine, and confiscation of the sums found. It was also forbidden to buy up jewellery, plate, and precious stones, and informers were encouraged to make search for offenders, by the promise of one-half the amount they might discover. The whole country sent up a cry of distress at this unheard-of tyranny. The most odious persecution daily took place. The privacy of families was violated by the intrusion of informers and their agents. The most virtuous and honest were denounced for the crime of having been seen with a *louis d'or* in their possession. Servants betrayed their masters, one citizen became a spy upon his neighbour, and arrests and confiscations so multiplied, that the courts found a difficulty in getting through the immense increase of business thus occasioned. It was sufficient for an informer to say that he suspected any person of concealing money in his house, and immediately a search-warrant was granted. Lord Stair, the English ambassador, said, that it was now impossible to doubt of the sincerity of Law's conversion to the Catholic religion; he had established the *inquisition*, after having given abundant evidence of his faith in *transubstantiation*, by turning so much gold into paper.

Every epithet that popular hatred could suggest was showered upon the Regent and the unhappy Law. Coin, to any amount above five hundred livres, was an illegal tender, and nobody would take paper if he could help it. No one knew to-day what his notes would be worth to-morrow. "Never," says Duclos, in his Secret Memoirs of the Regency, "was seen a more capricious government—never was a more frantic tyranny exercised by hands less firm. It is inconceivable to those who were witnesses of the horrors of those times, and who look back upon them now as on a dream, that a sudden revolution did not break out—that Law and the Regent did not perish by a tragical death. They were both held in horror, but the people confined themselves to complaints; a sombre and timid despair, a stupid consternation, had seized upon all, and men's minds were too vile even to be capable of a courageous crime." It would appear that, at one time, a movement of the people was organized. Seditious writings were posted up against the walls, and were sent, in handbills, to the houses of the most conspicuous people. One of

them, given in the "Mémoires de la Régence," was to the following effect:—"Sir and Madam,—This is to give you notice that a St. Bartholomew's Day will be enacted again on Saturday and Sunday, if affairs do not alter. You are desired not to stir out, nor you, nor your servants. God preserve you from the flames! Give notice to your neighbours. Dated Saturday, May 25th, 1720." The immense number of spies with which the city was infested rendered the people mistrustful of one another, and beyond some trifling disturbances made in the evening by an insignificant group, which was soon dispersed, the peace of the capital was not compromised.

The value of shares in the Louisiana, or Mississippi stock, had fallen very rapidly, and few indeed were found to believe the tales that had once been told of the immense wealth of that region. A last effort was therefore tried to restore the public confidence in the Mississippi project. For this purpose, a general conscription of all the poor wretches in Paris was made by order of government. Upwards of six thousand of the very refuse of the population were impressed, as if in time of war, and were provided with clothes and tools to be embarked for New Orleans, to work in the gold mines alleged to abound there. They were paraded day after day through the streets with their pikes and shovels, and then sent off in small detachments to the out-ports to be shipped for America. Two-thirds of them never reached their destination, but dispersed themselves over the country, sold their tools for what they could get, and returned to their old course of life. In less than three weeks afterwards, one-half of them were to be found again in Paris. The manœuvre, however, caused a trifling advance in Mississippi stock. Many persons of superabundant gullibility believed that operations had begun in earnest in the new Golconda, and that gold and silver ingots would again be found in France.

In a constitutional monarchy some surer means would have been found for the restoration of public credit. In England, at a subsequent period, when a similar delusion had brought on similar distress, how different were the measures taken to repair the evil; but in France, unfortunately, the remedy was left to the authors of the mischief. The arbitrary will of the Regent, which endeavoured to extricate the country,

only plunged it deeper into the mire. All payments were ordered to be made in paper, and between the 1st of February and the end of May, notes were fabricated to the amount of upwards of 1500 millions of livres, or 60,000,000*l.* sterling. But the alarm once sounded, no art could make the people feel the slightest confidence in paper which was not exchangeable into metal. M. Lambert, the President of the Parliament of Paris, told the Regent to his face that he would rather have a hundred thousand livres in gold or silver, than five millions in the notes of his bank. When such was the general feeling, the superabundant issues of paper but increased the evil, by rendering still more enormous the disparity between the amount of specie and notes in circulation. Coin, which it was the object of the Regent to depreciate, rose in value on every fresh attempt to diminish it. In February, it was judged advisable that the Royal Bank should be incorporated with the Company of the Indies. An edict to that effect was published and registered by the Parliament. The state remained the guarantee for the notes of the bank, and no more were to be issued without an order in council. All the profits of the bank, since the time it had been taken out of Law's hands and made a national institution, were given over by the Regent to the Company of the Indies. This measure had the effect of raising for a short time the value of the Louisiana and other shares of the Company, but it failed in placing public credit on any permanent basis.

A council of state was held in the beginning of May, at which Law, D'Argenson (his colleague in the administration of the finances), and all the ministers were present. It was then computed that the total amount of notes in circulation was 2600 millions of livres, while the coin in the country was not quite equal to half that amount. It was evident to the majority of the council that some plan must be adopted to equalize the currency. Some proposed that the notes should be reduced to the value of the specie, while others proposed that the nominal value of the specie should be raised till it was on an equality with the paper. Law is said to have opposed both these projects, but failing in suggesting any other, it was agreed that the notes should be depreciated one-half. On the 21st of May, an edict was accordingly issued, by which it was decreed that the shares of the Com-

pany of the Indies, and the notes of the bank, should gradually diminish in value, till at the end of a year, they should only pass current for one-half of their nominal worth. The Parliament refused to register the edict—the greatest outcry was excited, and the state of the country became so alarming, that, as the only means of preserving tranquillity, the Council of the Regency was obliged to stultify its own proceedings, by publishing within seven days another edict, restoring the notes to their original value.

On the same day (the 27th of May) the bank stopped payment in specie. Law and D'Argenson were both dismissed from the ministry. The weak, vacillating, and cowardly Regent threw the blame of all the mischief upon Law, to whom, upon presenting himself at the Palais Royal, admittance was refused. At nightfall, however, he was sent for, and admitted into the palace by a secret door,* when the Regent endeavoured to console him, and made all manner of excuses for the severity with which in public he had been compelled to treat him. So capricious was his conduct, that, two days afterwards, he took him publicly to the opera, where he sat in the royal box, alongside of the Regent, who treated him with marked consideration in face of all the people. But such was the hatred against Law that the experiment had well-nigh proved fatal to him. The mob assailed his carriage with stones just as he was entering his own door; and if the coachman had not made a sudden jerk into the court-yard, and the domestics closed the gate immediately, he would, in all probability, have been dragged out and torn to pieces. On the following day, his wife and daughter were also assailed by the mob as they were returning in their carriage from the races. When the Regent was informed of these occurrences he sent Law a strong detachment of Swiss guards, who were stationed night and day in the court of his residence. The public indignation at last increased so much, that Law, finding his own house, even with this guard, insecure, took refuge in the Palais Royal, in the apartments of the Regent.

The Chancellor, D'Aguesseau, who had been dismissed in 1718 for his opposition to the projects of Law, was now recalled to aid in the restoration of credit. The Regent ac-

* Duclos, Mémoires Secrets de la Régence.

knowledged too late, that he had treated with unjustifiable harshness and mistrust one of the ablest, and perhaps the sole honest public man of that corrupt period. He had retired ever since his disgrace to his country-house at Fresnes, where, in the midst of severe but delightful philosophic studies, he had forgotten the intrigues of an unworthy court. Law himself, and the Chevalier de Conflans, a gentleman of the Regent's household, were despatched in a post-chaise, with orders to bring the ex-chancellor to Paris along with them. D'Aguesseau, consented to render what assistance he could, contrary to the advice of his friends, who did not approve that he should accept any recall to office of which Law was the bearer. On his arrival in Paris, five counsellors of the Parliament were admitted to confer with the Commissary of Finance, and on the 1st of June an order was published, abolishing the law which made it criminal to amass coin to the amount of more than five hundred livres. Every one was permitted to have as much specie as he pleased. In order that the bank-notes might be withdrawn, twenty-five millions of new notes were created, on the security of the revenues of the city of Paris, at two-and-a-half per cent. The bank-notes withdrawn were publicly burned in front of the Hôtel de Ville. The new notes were principally of the value of ten livres each; and on the 10th of June the bank was re-opened, with a sufficiency of silver coin to give in change for them.

These measures were productive of considerable advantage. All the population of Paris hastened to the bank, to get coin for their small notes; and silver becoming scarce, they were paid in copper. Very few complained that this was too heavy, although poor fellows might be continually seen toiling and sweating along the streets, laden with more than they could comfortably carry, in the shape of change for fifty livres. The crowds around the bank were so great, that hardly a day passed that some one was not pressed to death. On the 9th of July, the multitude was so dense and clamorous that the guards stationed at the entrance of the Mazarin Gardens closed the gate, and refused to admit any more. The crowd became incensed, and flung stones through the railings upon the soldiers. The latter, incensed in their turn, threatened to fire upon the people. At that instant one of

them was hit by a stone, and, taking up his piece, he fired into the crowd. One man fell dead immediately, and another was severely wounded. It was every instant expected that a general attack would have been commenced upon the bank; but the gates of the Mazarin Gardens being opened to the crowd, who saw a whole troop of soldiers, with their bayonets fixed, ready to receive them, they contented themselves by giving vent to their indignation in groans and hisses.

Eight days afterwards the concourse of people was so tremendous, that fifteen persons were squeezed to death at the doors of the bank. The people were so indignant that they took three of the bodies on stretchers before them, and proceeded, to the number of seven or eight thousand, to the gardens of the Palais Royal, that they might show the Regent the misfortunes that he and Law had brought upon the country. Law's coachman, who was sitting on the box of his master's carriage, in the court-yard of the palace, happened to have more zeal than discretion, and, not liking that the mob should abuse his master, he said, loud enough to be overheard by several persons, that they were all blackguards, and deserved to be hanged. The mob immediately set upon him, and, thinking that Law was in the carriage, broke it to pieces. The imprudent coachman narrowly escaped with his life. No further mischief was done; a body of troops making their appearance, the crowd quietly dispersed, after an assurance had been given by the Regent that the three bodies they had brought to show him should be decently buried at his own expense. The Parliament was sitting at the time of this uproar, and the President took upon himself to go out and see what was the matter. On his return he informed the councillors, that Law's carriage had been broken by the mob. All the members rose simultaneously, and expressed their joy by a loud shout, while one man, more zealous in his hatred than the rest, exclaimed, "*And Law himself, is* he *torn to pieces?*"*

* The Duchess of Orleans gives a different version of this story; but whichever be the true one, the manifestation of such feeling in a legislative assembly was not very creditable. She says, that the President was so transported with joy, that he was seized with a rhyming fit, and, returning into the hall, exclaimed to the members:—

"*Messieurs! Messieurs! bonne nouvelle!*
Le carrosse de Lass est reduit en canelle!"

Much undoubtedly depended on the credit of the Company of the Indies, which was answerable for so great a sum to the nation. It was, therefore, suggested in the council of the ministry, that any privileges which could be granted to enable it to fulfil its engagements, would be productive of the best results. With this end in view, it was proposed that the exclusive privilege of all maritime commerce should be secured to it, and an edict to that effect was published. But it was unfortunately forgotten that by such a measure all the merchants of the country would be ruined. The idea of such an immense privilege was generally scouted by the nation, and petition on petition was presented to the Parliament, that they would refuse to register the decree. They refused accordingly, and the Regent, remarking that they did nothing but fan the flame of sedition, exiled them to Blois. At the intercession of D'Aguesseau, the place of banishment was changed to Pontoise, and thither accordingly the councillors repaired, determined to set the Regent at defiance. They made every arrangement for rendering their temporary exile as agreeable as possible. The President gave the most elegant suppers, to which he invited all the gayest and wittiest company of Paris. Every night there was a concert and ball for the ladies. The usually grave and solemn judges and councillors joined in cards and other diversions, leading for several weeks a life of the most extravagant pleasure, for no other purpose than to show the Regent of how little consequence they deemed their banishment, and that when they willed it, they could make Pontoise a pleasanter residence than Paris.

Of all the nations in the world the French are the most renowned for singing over their grievances. Of that country it has been remarked with some truth, that its whole history may be traced in its songs. When Law, by the utter failure of his best-laid plans, rendered himself obnoxious, satire of course seized hold upon him, and, while caricatures of his person appeared in all the shops, the streets resounded with songs, in which neither he nor the Regent was spared. Many of these songs were far from decent; and one of them in particular counselled the application of all his notes to the most ignoble use to which paper can be applied. But the following, preserved in the letters of the Duchess of Orleans,

was the best and the most popular, and was to be heard for months in all the *carrefours* of Paris. The application of the chorus is happy enough:—

Aussitôt que Lass arriva
Dans notre bonne ville,
Monsieur le Régent publia
Que Lass serait utile
Pour rétablir la nation.
La faridondaine! la faridondon!
Mais il nous a tous enrichi,
Biribi!
A la façon de Barbari,
Mon ami!

Ce parpaillot, pour attirer
Tout l'argent de la France,
Songea d'abord à s'assurer
De notre confiance.
Il fit son abjuration.
La faridondaine! la faridondon!
Mais le fourbe s'est converti,
Biribi!
A la façon de Barbari,
Mon ami!

Lass, le fils ainé de Satan
Nous met tous à l'aumône,
Il nous a pris tout notre argent
Et n'en rend à personne.
Mais le Régent, humain et bon,
La faridondaine! la faridondon!
Nous rendra ce qu'on nous a pris,
Biribi!
A la façon de Barbari,
Mon ami!

The following smart epigram is of the same date:—

Lundi, j'achetai des actions;
Mardi, je gagnai des millions;
Mercredi, j'arrangeai mon ménage,
Jeudi, je pris un équipage,
Vendredi, je m'en fus au bal,
Et Samedi, à l'Hôpital.

Among the caricatures that were abundantly published, and that showed as plainly as graver matters, that the nation had awakened to a sense of its folly, was one, a fac-simile of which is preserved in the "Mémoires de la Régence." It was thus described by its author: "The 'Goddess of Shares,'

in her triumphal car, driven by the Goddess of Folly. Those who are drawing the car are impersonations of the Mississippi, with his wooden leg, the South Sea, the Bank of England, the Company of the West of Senegal, and of various assurances. Lest the car should not roll fast enough, the agents of these companies, known by their long fox-tails and their cunning looks, turn round the spokes of the wheels, upon which are marked the names of the several stocks, and their value, sometimes high and sometimes low, according to the turns of the wheel. Upon the ground are the merchandise, day-books and ledgers of legitimate commerce, crushed under the chariot of Folly. Behind is an immense crowd of persons, of all ages, sexes and conditions, clamouring after Fortune, and fighting with each other to get a portion of the shares which she distributes so bountifully among them. In the cloud sits a demon, blowing bubbles of soap, which are also the objects of the admiration and cupidity of the crowd, who jump upon one another's backs to reach them ere they burst. Right in the pathway of the car, and blocking up the passage, stands a large building, with three doors, through one of which it must pass, if it proceeds further, and all the crowd along with it. Over the first door are the words, '*Hôpital des Foux*,' over the second, '*Hôpital des Malades*,' and over the third, '*Hôpital des Gueux*.'" Another caricature represented Law sitting in a large cauldron, boiling over the flames of popular madness, surrounded by an impetuous multitude, who were pouring all their gold and silver into it, and receiving gladly in exchange the bits of paper which he distributed among them by handsful.

While this excitement lasted, Law took good care not to expose himself unguarded in the streets. Shut up in the apartments of the Regent, he was secure from all attack, and, whenever he ventured abroad, it was either *incognito*, or in one of the Royal carriages, with a powerful escort. An amusing anecdote is recorded of the detestation in which he was held by the people, and the ill treatment he would have met, had he fallen into their hands. A gentleman, of the name of Boursel, was passing in his carriage down the Rue St. Antoine, when his further progress was stayed by a hackney-coach that had blocked up the road. M. Boursel's servant called impatiently to the hackney-coachman to get out

of the way, and, on his refusal, struck him a blow on the face. A crowd was soon drawn together by the disturbance, and M. Boursel got out of the carriage to restore order. The hackney-coachman, imagining that he had now another assailant, bethought him of an expedient to rid himself of both, and called out as loudly as he was able, "Help! help! murder! murder! Here are Law and his servant going to kill me! Help! help!" At this cry, the people came out of their shops, armed with sticks and other weapons, while the mob gathered stones to inflict summary vengeance upon the supposed financier. Happily for M. Boursel and his servant, the door of the church of the Jesuits stood wide open, and, seeing the fearful odds against them, they rushed towards it with all speed. They reached the altar, pursued by the people, and would have been ill treated even there, if, finding the door open leading to the sacristy, they had not sprang through, and closed it after them. The mob were then persuaded to leave the church by the alarmed and indignant priests; and finding M. Boursel's carriage still in the streets, they vented their ill-will against it, and did it considerable damage.

The twenty-five millions secured on the municipal revenues of the city of Paris, bearing so low an interest as two and a half per cent., were not very popular among the large holders of Mississippi stock. The conversion of the securities was, therefore, a work of considerable difficulty; for many preferred to retain the falling paper of Law's Company, in the hope that a favourable turn might take place. On the 15th of August, with a view to hasten the conversion, an edict was passed, declaring that all notes for sums between one thousand and ten thousand livres, should not pass current, except for the purchase of annuities and bank accounts, or for the payment of instalments still due on the shares of the Company.

In October following another edict was passed, depriving these notes of all value whatever after the month of November next ensuing. The management of the mint, the farming of the revenue, and all the other advantages and privileges of the India, or Mississippi Company, were taken from them, and they were reduced to a mere private company. This was the deathblow to the whole system, which had now got into the hands of its enemies. Law had lost all influence in

the Council of Finance, and the Company, being despoiled of its immunities, could no longer hold out the shadow of a prospect of being able to fulfil its engagements. All those suspected of illegal profits at the time the public delusion was at its height, were sought out and amerced in heavy fines. It was previously ordered that a list of the original proprietors should be made out, and that such persons as still retained their shares should place them in deposit with the Company, and that those who had neglected to complete the shares for which they had put down their names, should now purchase them of the Company, at the rate of 13,500 livres for each share of 500 livres. Rather than submit to pay this enormous sum for stock which was actually at a discount, the shareholders packed up all their portable effects, and endeavoured to find refuge in foreign countries. Orders were immediately issued to the authorities at the ports and frontiers, to apprehend all travellers who sought to leave the kingdom, and keep them in custody, until it was ascertained whether they had any plate or jewellery with them, or were concerned in the late stockjobbing. Against such few as escaped, the punishment of death was recorded, while the most arbitrary proceedings were instituted against those who remained.

Law himself, in a moment of despair, determined to leave a country where his life was no longer secure. He at first only demanded permission to retire from Paris to one of his country-seats; a permission which the Regent cheerfully granted. The latter was much affected at the unhappy turn affairs had taken, but his faith continued unmoved in the truth and efficacy of Law's financial system. His eyes were opened to his own errors, and during the few remaining years of his life, he constantly longed for an opportunity of again establishing the system upon a securer basis. At Law's last interview with the Prince, he is reported to have said—"I confess that I have committed many faults; I committed them because I am a man, and all men are liable to error; but I declare to you most solemnly that none of them proceeded from wicked or dishonest motives, and that nothing of the kind will be found in the whole course of my conduct."

Two or three days after his departure the Regent sent him a very kind letter, permitting him to leave the kingdom whenever he pleased, and stating that he had ordered his passports

to be made ready. He at the same time offered him any sum of money he might require. Law respectfully declined the money, and set out for Brussels in a postchaise belonging to Madame de Prie, the mistress of the Duke of Bourbon, escorted by six horse-guards. Thence he proceeded to Venice, where he remained for some months, the object of the greatest curiosity to the people, who believed him to be the possessor of enormous wealth. No opinion, however, could be more erroneous. With more generosity than could have been expected from a man who, during the greatest part of his life had been a professed gambler, he had refused to enrich himself at the expense of a ruined nation. During the height of the popular frenzy for Mississippi stock, he had never doubted of the final success of his projects, in making France the richest and most powerful nation of Europe. He invested all his gains in the purchase of landed property in France—a sure proof of his own belief in the stability of his schemes. He had hoarded no plate or jewellery, and sent no money, like the dishonest jobbers, to foreign countries. His all, with the exception of one diamond, worth about five or six thousand pounds sterling, was invested in the French soil; and when he left that country, he left it almost a beggar. This fact alone ought to rescue his memory from the charge of knavery, so often and so unjustly brought against him.

As soon as his departure was known, all his estates and his valuable library were confiscated. Among the rest, an annuity of 200,000 livres, (8000*l.* sterling,) on the lives of his wife and children, which had been purchased for five millions of livres, was forfeited, notwithstanding that a special edict, drawn up for the purpose in the days of his prosperity, had expressly declared that it should never be confiscated for any cause whatever. Great discontent existed among the people that Law had been suffered to escape. The mob and the Parliament would have been pleased to have seen him hanged. The few who had not suffered by the commercial revolution, rejoiced that the *quack* had left the country; but all those (and they were by far the most numerous class) whose fortunes were implicated, regretted that his intimate knowledge of the distress of the country, and of the causes that had led to it, had not been rendered more available in discovering a remedy.

At a meeting of the Council of Finance, and the general council of the Regency, documents were laid upon the table, from which it appeared that the amount of notes in circulation was 2700 millions. The Regent was called upon to explain how it happened that there was a discrepancy between the dates at which these issues were made, and those of the edicts by which they were authorized. He might have safely taken the whole blame upon himself, but he preferred that an absent man should bear a share of it, and he therefore stated that Law, upon his own authority, had issued 1200 millions of notes at different times, and that he (the Regent) seeing that the thing had been irrevocably done, had screened Law, by antedating the decrees of the council, which authorized the augmentation. It would have been more to his credit if he had told the whole truth while he was about it, and acknowledged that it was mainly through his extravagance and impatience that Law had been induced to overstep the bounds of safe speculation. It was also ascertained that the national debt, on the 1st of January, 1721, amounted to upwards of 3100 millions of livres, or more than 124,000,000*l.* sterling, the interest upon which was 3,196,000*l.* A commission, or *visa*, was forthwith appointed to examine into all the securities of the state creditors, who were to be divided into five classes, the first four comprising those who had purchased their securities with real effects, and the latter comprising those who could give no proofs that the transactions they had entered into were real and *bonâ fide*. The securities of the latter were ordered to be destroyed, while those of the first four classes were subjected to a most rigid and jealous scrutiny. The result of the labours of the *visa* was a report, in which they counselled the reduction of the interest upon these securities to fifty-six millions of livres. They justified this advice by a statement of the various acts of peculation and extortion which they had discovered, and an edict to that effect was accordingly published and duly registered by the parliaments of the kingdom.

Another tribunal was afterwards established, under the title of the *Chambre de l'Arsenal*, which took cognizance of all the malversations committed in the financial departments of the government during the late unhappy period. A Master

of Requests, named Falhonet, together with the Abbé Clement, and two clerks in their employ, had been concerned in divers acts of peculation, to the amount of upwards of a million of livres. The first two were sentenced to be beheaded, and the latter to be hanged; but their punishment was afterwards commuted into imprisonment for life in the Bastile. Numerous other acts of dishonesty were discovered, and punished by fine and imprisonment.

D'Argenson shared with Law and the Regent the unpopularity which had alighted upon all those concerned in the Mississippi madness. He was dismissed from his post of Chancellor, to make room for D'Aguesseau; but he retained the title of Keeper of the Seals, and was allowed to attend the councils whenever he pleased. He thought it better, however, to withdraw from Paris, and live for a time a life of seclusion at his country-seat. But he was not formed for retirement, and becoming moody and discontented, he aggravated a disease under which he had long laboured, and died in less than a twelvemonth. The populace of Paris so detested him, that they carried their hatred even to his grave. As his funeral procession passed to the church of St. Nicholas du Chardonneret, the burying-place of his family, it was beset by a riotous mob, and his two sons, who were following as chief-mourners, were obliged to drive as fast as they were able down a by-street to escape personal violence.

As regards Law, he for some time entertained a hope that he should be recalled to France, to aid in establishing its credit upon a firmer basis. The death of the Regent, in 1723, who expired suddenly, as he was sitting by the fireside conversing with his mistress, the Duchess de Phalaris, deprived him of that hope, and he was reduced to lead his former life of gambling. He was more than once obliged to pawn his diamond, the sole remnant of his vast wealth, but successful play generally enabled him to redeem it. Being persecuted by his creditors at Rome, he proceeded to Copenhagen, where he received permission from the English ministry, to reside in his native country, his pardon for the murder of Mr. Wilson having been sent over to him in 1719. He was brought over in the admiral's ship, a circumstance which gave occasion for a short debate in the House of Lords. Earl Coningsby complained that a man, who had renounced

both his country and his religion, should have been treated with such honour, and expressed his belief that his presence in England, at a time when the people were so bewildered by the nefarious practices of the South Sea directors, would be attended with no little danger. He gave notice of a motion on the subject; but it was allowed to drop, no other member of the House having the slightest participation in his lordship's fears. Law remained for about four years in England, and then proceeded to Venice, where he died in 1729, in very embarrassed circumstances. The following epitaph was written at the time:—

"Ci gît cet Ecossais célèbre,
Ce calculateur sans égal,
Qui, par les regles de l'algébre,
A mis la France à l'Hôpital."

His brother, William Law, who had been concerned with him in the administration both of the Bank and the Louisiana Company, was imprisoned in the Bastile for alleged malversation, but no guilt was ever proved against him. He was liberated after fifteen months, and became the founder of a family, which is still known in France under the title of Marquises of Lauriston.

In the next chapter will be found an account of the madness which infected the people of England at the same time, and under very similar circumstances, but which, thanks to the energies and good sense of a constitutional government, was attended with results far less disastrous than those which were seen in France.

THE SOUTH SEA BUBBLE.

At length corruption, like a general flood,
Did deluge all, and avarice creeping on,
Spread, like a low-born mist, and hid the sun.
Statesmen and patriots plied alike the stocks,
Peeress and butler shared alike the box;
And judges jobbed, and bishops bit the town,
And mighty dukes packed cards for half-a-crown:
Britain was sunk in lucre's sordid charms.

POPE.

THE South Sea Company was originated by the celebrated Harley, Earl of Oxford, in the year 1711, with the view of restoring public credit, which had suffered by the dismissal of the Whig ministry, and of providing for the discharge of the army and navy debentures, and other parts of the floating debt, amounting to nearly ten millions sterling. A company of merchants, at that time without a name, took this debt upon themselves, and the government agreed to secure to them, for a certain period, the interest of six per cent. To provide for this interest, amounting to 600,000*l.* per annum, the duties upon wines, vinegar, India goods, wrought silks, tobacco, whale-fins, and some other articles, were rendered permanent. The monopoly of the trade to the South Seas was granted, and the Company, being incorporated by Act of Parliament, assumed the title by which it has ever since been known. The minister took great credit to himself for his share in this transaction, and the scheme was always called by his flatterers "the Earl of Oxford's masterpiece."

Even at this early period of its history, the most visionary ideas were formed by the Company and the public of the immense riches of the eastern coast of South America. Everybody had heard of the gold and silver mines of Peru and Mexico; every one believed them to be inexhaustible, and

that it was only necessary to send the manufactures of England to the coast, to be repaid a hundredfold in gold and silver ingots by the natives. A report, industriously spread, that Spain was willing to concede four ports, on the coasts of Chili and Peru, for the purposes of traffic, increased the general confidence; and for many years the South Sea Company's stock was in high favour.

Philip V. of Spain, however, never had any intention of admitting the English to a free trade in the ports of Spanish America. Negotiations were set on foot, but their only result was the *assiento* contract, or the privilege of supplying the colonies with negroes for thirty years, and of sending once a year a vessel, limited both as to tonnage and value of cargo, to trade with Mexico, Peru, or Chili. The latter permission was only granted upon the hard condition, that the King of Spain should enjoy one-fourth of the profits, and a tax of five per cent. on the remainder. This was a great disappointment to the Earl of Oxford and his party, who were reminded much oftener than they found agreeable of the

"*Parturiunt montes, nascitur ridiculus mus.*"

But the public confidence in the South Sea Company was not shaken. The Earl of Oxford declared, that Spain would permit two ships, in addition to the annual ship, to carry out merchandise during the first year; and a list was published, in which all the ports and harbours of these coasts were pompously set forth as open to the trade of Great Britain. The first voyage of the annual ship was not made till the year 1717, and in the following year the trade was suppressed by the rupture with Spain.

The King's speech, at the opening of the session of 1717, made pointed allusion to the state of public credit, and recommended that proper measures should be taken to reduce the national debt. The two great monetary corporations, the South Sea Company and the Bank of England, made proposals to Parliament on the 20th of May ensuing. The South Sea Company prayed that their capital stock of ten millions might be increased to twelve, by subscription or otherwise, and offered to accept five per cent. instead of six

upon the whole amount. The Bank made proposals equally advantageous. The House debated for some time, and finally three acts were passed, called the South Sea Act, the Bank Act, and the General Fund Act. By the first, the proposals of the South Sea Company were accepted, and that body held itself ready to advance the sum of two millions towards discharging the principal and interest of the debt due by the state for the four lottery funds of the ninth and tenth years of Queen Anne. By the second act, the Bank received a lower rate of interest for the sum of 1,775,027*l.* 15*s.* due to it by the state, and agreed to deliver up to be cancelled as many Exchequer bills as amounted to two millions sterling, and to accept of an annuity of one hundred thousand pounds, being after the rate of five per cent., the whole redeemable at one year's notice. They were further required to be ready to advance, in case of need, a sum not exceeding 2,500,000*l.* upon the same terms of five per cent. interest, redeemable by Parliament. The General Fund Act recited the various deficiencies, which were to be made good by the aids derived from the foregoing sources.

The name of the South Sea Company was thus continually before the public. Though their trade with the South American States produced little or no augmentation of their revenues, they continued to flourish as a monetary corporation. Their stock was in high request, and the directors, buoyed up with success, began to think of new means for extending their influence. The Mississippi Scheme of John Law, which so dazzled and captivated the French people, inspired them with an idea that they could carry on the same game in England. The anticipated failure of his plans did not divert them from their intention. Wise in their own conceit, they imagined they could avoid his faults, carry on their schemes for ever, and stretch the cord of credit to its extremest tension, without causing it to snap asunder.

It was while Law's plan was at its greatest height of popularity, while people were crowding in thousands to the Rue Quincampoix, and ruining themselves with frantic eagerness, that the South Sea directors laid before Parliament their famous plan for paying off the national debt. Visions of boundless wealth floated before the fascinated eyes of the people in the two most celebrated countries of Europe. The

English commenced their career of extravagance somewhat later than the French; but as soon as the delirium seized them, they were determined not to be outdone. Upon the 22d of January, 1720, the House of Commons resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House, to take into consideration that part of the King's speech at the opening of the session which related to the public debts, and the proposal of the South Sea Company towards the redemption and sinking of the same. The proposal set forth at great length, and under several heads, the debts of the state, amounting to £30,981,712, which the Company were anxious to take upon themselves, upon consideration of five per cent. per annum, secured to them until Midsummer, 1727; after which time, the whole was to become redeemable at the pleasure of the legislature, and the interest to be reduced to four per cent. The proposal was received with great favour; but the Bank of England had many friends in the House of Commons, who were desirous that that body should share in the advantages that were likely to accrue. On behalf of this corporation it was represented, that they had performed great and eminent services to the state, in the most difficult times, and deserved, at least, that if any advantage was to be made by public bargains of this nature, they should be preferred before a company that had never done anything for the nation. The further consideration of the matter was accordingly postponed for five days. In the mean time, a plan was drawn up by the Governors of the Bank. The South Sea Company, afraid that the Bank might offer still more advantageous terms to the government than themselves, reconsidered their former proposal, and made some alterations in it, which they hoped would render it more acceptable. The principal change was a stipulation that the government might redeem these debts at the expiration of four years, instead of seven, as at first suggested. The Bank resolved not to be outbidden in this singular auction, and the Governors also reconsidered their first proposal, and sent in a new one.

Thus, each corporation having made two proposals, the House began to deliberate. Mr. Robert Walpole was the chief speaker in favour of the Bank, and Mr. Aislabie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the principal advocate on behalf of the South Sea Company. It was resolved, on the 2d of

February, that the proposals of the latter were most advantageous to the country. They were accordingly received, and leave was given to bring in a bill to that effect.

Exchange Alley was in a fever of excitement. The Company's stock, which had been at a hundred and thirty the previous day, gradually rose to three hundred, and continued to rise with the most astonishing rapidity during the whole time that the bill in its several stages was under discussion. Mr. Walpole was almost the only statesman in the House who spoke out boldly against it. He warned them, in eloquent and solemn language, of the evils that would ensue. It countenanced, he said, "the dangerous practice of stock-jobbing, and would divert the genius of the nation from trade and industry. It would hold out a dangerous lure to decoy the unwary to their ruin, by making them part with the earnings of their labour for a prospect of imaginary wealth. The great principle of the project was an evil of first-rate magnitude; it was to raise artificially the value of the stock, by exciting and keeping up a general infatuation, and by promising dividends out of funds which could never be adequate to the purpose." In a prophetic spirit he added, that if the plan succeeded, the directors would become masters of the government, form a new and absolute aristocracy in the kingdom, and control the resolutions of the legislature. If it failed, which he was convinced it would, the result would bring general discontent and ruin upon the country. Such would be the delusion, that when the evil day came, as come it would, the people would start up, as from a dream, and ask themselves if these things could have been true. All his eloquence was in vain. He was looked upon as a false prophet, or compared to the hoarse raven, croaking omens of evil. His friends, however, compared him to Cassandra, predicting evils which would only be believed when they came home to men's hearths, and stared them in the face at their own boards. Although, in former times, the House had listened with the utmost attention to every word that fell from his lips, the benches became deserted when it was known that he would speak on the South Sea question.

The bill was two months in its progress through the House of Commons. During this time every exertion was made by the directors and their friends, and more especially by the

Chairman, the noted Sir John Blunt, to raise the price of the stock. The most extravagant rumours were in circulation. Treaties between England and Spain were spoken of, whereby the latter was to grant a free trade to all her colonies; and the rich produce of the mines of Potosi-la-Paz was to be brought to England until silver should become almost as plentiful as iron. For cotton and woollen goods, with which we could supply them in abundance, the dwellers in Mexico were to empty their golden mines. The company of merchants trading to the South Seas would be the richest the world ever saw, and every hundred pounds invested in it would produce hundreds per annum to the stockholder. At last the stock was raised by these means to near four hundred; but, after fluctuating a good deal, settled at three hundred and thirty, at which price it remained when the bill passed the Commons by a majority of 172 against 55.

In the House of Lords the bill was hurried through all its stages with unexampled rapidity. On the 4th of April it was read a first time; on the 5th, it was read a second time; on the 6th, it was committed; and on the 7th, was read a third time, and passed.

Several peers spoke warmly against the scheme; but their warnings fell upon dull, cold ears. A speculating frenzy had seized them as well as the plebeians. Lord North and Grey said the bill was unjust in its nature, and might prove fatal in its consequences, being calculated to enrich the few and impoverish the many. The Duke of Wharton followed; but, as he only retailed at second-hand the arguments so eloquently stated by Walpole in the Lower House, he was not listened to with even the same attention that had been bestowed upon Lord North and Grey. Earl Cowper followed on the same side, and compared the bill to the famous horse of the siege of Troy. Like that, it was ushered in and received with great pomp and acclamations of joy, but bore within it treachery and destruction. The Earl of Sunderland endeavoured to answer all objections; and, on the question being put, there appeared only seventeen peers against, and eighty-three in favour of the project. The very same day on which it passed the Lords, it received the Royal assent, and became the law of the land.

It seemed at that time as if the whole nation had turned

stockjobbers. Exchange Alley was every day blocked up by crowds, and Cornhill was impassable for the number of carriages. Everybody came to purchase stock. "Every fool aspired to be a knave." In the words of a ballad, published at the time, and sung about the streets,*

Then stars and garters did appear
Among the meaner rabble;
To buy and sell, to see and hear,
The Jews and Gentiles squabble.

The greatest ladies thither came,
And plied in chariots daily,
Or pawned their jewels for a sum
To venture in the Alley.

* * * * *

The inordinate thirst of gain that had afflicted all ranks of society, was not to be slaked even in the South Sea. Other schemes, of the most extravagant kind, were started. The share-lists were speedily filled up, and an enormous traffic carried on in shares, while, of course, every means were resorted to, to raise them to an artificial value in the market.

Contrary to all expectation, South Sea stock fell when the bill received the Royal assent. On the 7th of April the shares were quoted at three hundred and ten, and on the following day, at two hundred and ninety. Already the directors had tasted the profits of their scheme, and it was not likely that they should quietly allow the stock to find its natural level, without an effort to raise it. Immediately their busy emissaries were set to work. Every person interested in the success of the project endeavoured to draw a knot of listeners around him, to whom he expatiated on the treasures of the South American seas. Exchange Alley was crowded with attentive groups. One rumour alone, asserted with the utmost confidence, had an immediate effect upon the stock. It was said, that Earl Stanhope had received overtures in France from the Spanish Government to exchange Gibraltar and Port Mahon for some places on the coast of Peru, for the security and enlargement of the trade in the South Seas.

* "A South Sea Ballad; or, Merry Remarks upon Exchange Alley Bubbles. To a new tune, called 'The Grand Elixir; or, the Philosopher's Stone Discovered.'"

Instead of one annual ship trading to those ports, and allowing the King of Spain twenty-five per cent. out of the profits, the Company might build and charter as many ships as they pleased, and pay no percentage whatever to any foreign potentate.

Visions of ingots danced before their eyes,

and stock rose rapidly. On the 12th of April, five days after the bill had become law, the directors opened their books for a subscription of a million, at the rate of £300 for every £100 capital. Such was the concourse of persons, of all ranks, that this first subscription was found to amount to above two millions of original stock. It was to be paid at five payments, of £60 each for every £100. In a few days the stock advanced to three hundred and forty, and the subscriptions were sold for double the price of the first payment. To raise the stock still higher, it was declared, in a general court of directors, on the 21st of April, that the midsummer dividend should be ten per cent., and that all subscriptions should be entitled to the same. These resolutions answering the end designed, the directors, to improve the infatuation of the monied men, opened their books for a second subscription of a million, at four hundred per cent. Such was the frantic eagerness of people of every class to speculate in these funds, that in the course of a few hours no less than a million and a half was subscribed at that rate.

In the mean time, innumerable joint-stock companies started up everywhere. They soon received the name of Bubbles, the most appropriate that imagination could devise. The populace are often most happy in the nicknames they employ. None could be more apt than that of Bubbles. Some of them lasted for a week, or a fortnight, and were no more heard of, while others could not even live out that short span of existence. Every evening produced new schemes, and every morning new projects. The highest of the aristocracy were as eager in this hot pursuit of gain as the most plodding jobber in Cornhill. The Prince of Wales became governor of one company, and is said to have cleared £40,000 by his speculations.* The Duke of Bridgewater started a scheme

* Coxe's Walpole, Correspondence between Mr. Secretary Craggs and Earl Stanhope.

for the improvement of London and Westminster, and the Duke of Chandos another. There were nearly a hundred different projects, each more extravagant and deceptive than the other. To use the words of the "Political State," they were "set on foot and promoted by crafty knaves, then pursued by multitudes of covetous fools, and at last appeared to be, in effect, what their vulgar appellation denoted them to be—bubbles and mere cheats." It was computed that near one million and a half sterling was won and lost by these unwarrantable practices, to the impoverishment of many a fool, and the enriching of many a rogue.

Some of these schemes were plausible enough, and, had they been undertaken at a time when the public mind was unexcited, might have been pursued with advantage to all concerned. But they were established merely with the view of raising the shares in the market. The projectors took the first opportunity of a rise to sell out, and next morning the scheme was at an end. Maitland, in his History of London, gravely informs us, that one of the projects which received great encouragement, was for the establishment of a company "to make deal-boards out of saw-dust." This is, no doubt, intended as a joke; but there is abundance of evidence to show that dozens of schemes hardly a whit more reasonable, lived their little day, ruining hundreds ere they fell. One of them was for a wheel for perpetual motion—capital, one million; another was "for encouraging the breed of horses in England, and improving of glebe and church lands, and repairing and rebuilding parsonage and vicarage houses." Why the clergy, who were so mainly interested in the latter clause, should have taken so much interest in the first, is only to be explained on the supposition that the scheme was projected by a knot of the fox-hunting parsons, once so common in England. The shares of this company were rapidly subscribed for. But the most absurd and preposterous of all, and which showed, more completely than any other, the utter madness of the people, was one started by an unknown adventurer, entitled "*A company for carrying on an undertaking of great advantage, but nobody to know what it is.*" Were not the fact stated by scores of credible witnesses, it would be impossible to believe that any person could have been duped by such a project. The man of genius who es-

sayed this bold and successful inroad upon public credulity, merely stated in his prospectus that the required capital was half a million, in five thousand shares of £100 each, deposit £2 per share. Each subscriber, paying his deposit, would be entitled to £100 per annum per share. How this immense profit was to be obtained, he did not condescend to inform them at that time, but promised, that in a month full particulars should be duly announced, and a call made for the remaining £98 of the subscription. Next morning, at nine o'clock, this great man opened an office in Cornhill. Crowds of people beset his door, and when he shut up at three o'clock, he found that no less than one thousand shares had been subscribed for, and the deposits paid. He was thus, in five hours, the winner of £2,000. He was philosopher enough to be contented with his venture, and set off the same evening for the Continent. He was never heard of again.

Well might Swift exclaim, comparing Change Alley to a gulf in the South Sea,—

> Subscribers here by thousands float,
> And jostle one another down,
> Each paddling in his leaky boat,
> And here they fish for gold, and drown.
>
> Now buried in the depths below,
> Now mounted up to heaven again,
> They reel and stagger to and fro,
> At their wit's end, like drunken men.
>
> Meantime, secure on Garraway cliffs,
> A savage race, by shipwrecks fed,
> Lie waiting for the foundered skiffs,
> And strip the bodies of the dead.

Another fraud that was very successful, was that of the "Globe *Permits*," as they were called. They were nothing more than square pieces of playing cards, on which was the impression of a seal, in wax, bearing the sign of the Globe Tavern, in the neighbourhood of Exchange Alley, with the inscription of "Sail Cloth Permits." The possessors enjoyed no other advantage from them than permission to subscribe, at some future time, to a new sail-cloth manufactory, projected by one who was then known to be a man of fortune, but who was afterwards involved in the peculation and punishment

of the South Sea directors. These permits sold for as much as sixty guineas in the Alley.

Persons of distinction, of both sexes, were deeply engaged in all these bubbles, those of the male sex going to taverns and coffee-houses to meet their brokers, and the ladies resorting for the same purpose to the shops of milliners and haberdashers. But it did not follow that all these people believed in the feasibility of the schemes to which they subscribed; it was enough for their purpose that their shares would, by stockjobbing arts, be soon raised to a premium, when they got rid of them with all expedition to the really credulous. So great was the confusion of the crowd in the Alley, that shares in the same bubble were known to have been sold at the same instant ten per cent. higher at one end of the Alley than at the other. Sensible men beheld the extraordinary infatuation of the people with sorrow and alarm. There were some, both in and out of Parliament, who foresaw clearly the ruin that was impending. Mr. Walpole did not cease his gloomy forebodings. His fears were shared by all the thinking few, and impressed most forcibly upon the government. On the 11th of June, the day the Parliament rose, the King published a proclamation, declaring that all these unlawful projects should be deemed public nuisances, and prosecuted accordingly, and forbidding any broker, under a penalty of five hundred pounds, from buying or selling any shares in them. Notwithstanding this proclamation, roguish speculators still carried them on, and the deluded people still encouraged them. On the 12th of July, an order of the Lords Justices assembled in privy council was published, dismissing all the petitions that had been presented for patents and charters, and dissolving all the bubble companies. The following copy of their lordships' order, containing a list of all these nefarious projects, will not be deemed uninteresting at the present day, when there is but too much tendency in the public mind to indulge in similar practices :—

> "At the Council Chamber, Whitehall, the 12th day of July, 1720. Present, their Excellencies the Lords Justices in Council.

"Their Excellencies, the Lords Justices in council, taking into consideration the many inconveniences arising to the

public from several projects set on foot for raising of joint stock for various purposes, and that a great many of his Majesty's subjects have been drawn in to part with their money on pretence of assurances that their petitions for patents and charters, to enable them to carry on the same, would be granted: to prevent such impositions, their Excellencies, this day, ordered the said several petitions, together with such reports from the Board of Trade, and from his Majesty's Attorney and Solicitor-General, as had been obtained thereon, to be laid before them, and after mature consideration thereof, were pleased, by advice of his Majesty's Privy Council, to order that the said petitions be dismissed, which are as follow:—

"1. Petition of several persons, praying letters patent for carrying on a fishing trade, by the name of the Grand Fishery of Great Britain.

"2. Petition of the Company of the Royal Fishery of England, praying letters patent for such further powers as will effectually contribute to carry on the said fishery.

"3. Petition of George James, on behalf of himself and divers persons of distinction concerned in a national fishery; praying letters patent of incorporation to enable them to carry on the same.

"4. Petition of several merchants, traders, and others, whose names are thereunto subscribed, praying to be incorporated for reviving and carrying on a whale fishery to Greenland and elsewhere.

"5. Petition of Sir John Lambert, and others thereto subscribing, on behalf of themselves and a great number of merchants, praying to be incorporated for carrying on a Greenland trade, and particularly a whale fishery in Davis's Straits.

"6. Another petition for a Greenland trade.

"7. Petition of several merchants, gentlemen, and citizens, praying to be incorporated for buying and building of ships to let or freight.

"8. Petition of Samuel Antrim and others, praying for letters patent for sowing hemp and flax.

"9. Petition of several merchants, masters of ships, sail-makers, and manufacturers of sail-cloth, praying a charter of incorporation, to enable them to carry on and promote the said manufactory by a joint stock.

"10. Petition of Thomas Boyd, and several hundred merchants, owners and masters of ships, sail-makers, weavers, and other traders, praying a charter of incorporation, empowering them to borrow money for purchasing lands, in order to the manufacturing sail-cloth and fine Holland.

"11. Petition on behalf of several persons interested in a patent granted by the late King William and Queen Mary, for the making of linen and sail-cloth, praying that no charter may be granted to any persons whatsoever for making sail-cloth, but that the privilege now enjoyed by them may be confirmed, and likewise an additional power to carry on the cotton and cotton-silk manufactures.

"12. Petition of several citizens, merchants, and traders in London, and others, subscribers to a British stock, for a general insurance from fire in any part of England, praying to be incorporated for carrying on the said undertaking.

"13. Petition of several of his Majesty's loyal subjects of the city of London, and other parts of Great Britain, praying to be incorporated, for carrying on a general insurance from losses by fire within the kingdom of England.

"14. Petition of Thomas Burges, and others his Majesty's subjects thereto subscribing, in behalf of themselves and others, subscribers to a fund of 1,200,000*l.* for carrying on a trade to his Majesty's German dominions, praying to be incorporated, by the name of the Harburg Company.

"15. Petition of Edward Jones, a dealer in timber, on behalf of himself and others, praying to be incorporated for the importation of timber from Germany.

"16. Petition of several merchants of London, praying a charter of incorporation for carrying on a salt-work.

"17. Petition of Captain Macphedris, of London, merchant, on behalf of himself and several merchants, clothiers, hatters, dyers, and other traders, praying a charter of incorporation, empowering them to raise a sufficient sum of money to purchase lands for planting and rearing a wood called madder, for the use of dyers.

"18. Petition of Joseph Galendo, of London, snuff-maker, praying a patent for his invention to prepare and cure Virginia tobacco for snuff in Virginia, and making it into the same in all his Majesty's dominions."

LIST OF BUBBLES.

The following Bubble Companies were by the same order declared to be illegal, and abolished accordingly:—

1. For the importation of Swedish iron.
2. For supplying London with sea-coal. Capital, three millions.
3. For building and rebuilding houses throughout all England. Capital, three millions.
4. For making of muslin.
5. For carrying on and improving the British alum works.
6. For effectually settling the island of Blanco and Sal Tartagus.
7. For supplying the town of Deal with fresh water.
8. For the importation of Flanders lace.
9. For the improvement of lands in Great Britain. Capital, four millions.
10. For encouraging the breed of horses in England, and improving of glebe and church lands, and for repairing and rebuilding parsonage and vicarage houses.
11. For making of iron and steel in Great Britain.
12. For improving the land in the county of Flint. Capital, one million.
13. For purchasing lands to build on. Capital, two millions.
14. For trading in hair.
15. For erecting salt-works in Holy Island. Capital, two millions.
10. For buying and selling estates, and lending money on mortgage.
17. For carrying on an undertaking of great advantage, but nobody to know what it is.
18. For paving the streets of London. Capital, two millions.
19. For furnishing funerals to any part of Great Britain.
20. For buying and selling lands and lending money at interest. Capital, five millions.
21. For carrying on the Royal Fishery of Great Britain. Capital, ten millions.
22. For assuring of seamen's wages.

23. For erecting loan-offices for the assistance and encouragement of the industrious. Capital, two millions.

24. For purchasing and improving leasable lands. Capital, four millions.

25. For importing pitch and tar, and other naval stores, from North Britain and America.

26. For the clothing, felt, and pantile trade.

27. For purchasing and improving a manor and royalty in Essex.

28. For insuring of horses. Capital, two millions.

29. For exporting the woollen manufacture, and importing copper, brass, and iron. Capital, four millions.

30. For a grand dispensary. Capital, three millions.

31. For erecting mills and purchasing lead mines. Capital, two millions.

32. For improving the art of making soap.

33. For a settlement on the island of Santa Cruz.

34. For sinking pits and smelting lead ore in Derbyshire.

35. For making glass bottles and other glass.

36. For a wheel for perpetual motion. Capital, one million.

37. For improving of gardens.

38. For insuring and increasing children's fortunes.

39. For entering and loading goods at the custom-house, and for negotiating business for merchants.

40. For carrying on a woollen manufacture in the north of England.

41. For importing walnut-trees from Virginia. Capital, two millions.

42. For making Manchester stuffs of thread and cotton.

43. For making Joppa and Castile soap.

44. For improving the wrought-iron and steel manufactures of this kingdom. Capital, four millions.

45. For dealing in lace, Hollands, cambrics, lawns, &c. Capital, two millions.

46. For trading in and improving certain commodities of the produce of this kingdom, &c. Capital, three millions.

47. For supplying the London markets with cattle.

48. For making looking-glasses, coach glasses, &c. Capital, two millions.

49. For working the tin and lead mines in Cornwall and Derbyshire.

50. For making rape-oil.

51. For importing beaver fur. Capital, two millions.

52. For making pasteboard and packing-paper.

53. For importing of oils and other materials used in the woollen manufacture.

54. For improving and increasing the silk manufactures.

55. For lending money on stock, annuities, tallies, &c.

56. For paying pensions to widows and others, at a small discount. Capital, two millions.

57. For improving malt liquors. Capital, four millions.

58. For a grand American fishery.

59. For purchasing and improving the fenny lands in Lincolnshire. Capital, two millions.

60. For improving the paper manufacture of Great Britain.

61. The Bottomry Company.

62. For drying malt by hot air.

63. For carrying on a trade in the river Oronooko.

64. For the more effectual making of baize, in Colchester and other parts of Great Britain.

65. For buying of naval stores, supplying the victualling, and paying the wages of the workmen.

66. For employing poor artificers, and furnishing merchants and others with watches.

67. For improvement of tillage and the breed of cattle.

68. Another for the improvement of our breed of horses.

69. Another for a horse-insurance.

70. For carrying on the corn trade of Great Britain.

71. For insuring to all masters and mistresses the losses they may sustain by servants. Capital, three millions.

72. For erecting houses or hospitals, for taking in and maintaining illegitimate children. Capital, two millions.

73. For bleaching coarse sugars, without the use of fire or loss of substance.

74. For building turnpikes and wharfs in Great Britain.

75. For insuring from thefts and robberies.

76. For extracting silver from lead.

77. For making China and Delft ware. Capital, one million.

78. For importing tobacco, and exporting it again to Sweden and the north of Europe. Capital, four millions.
79. For making iron with pit coal.
80. For furnishing the cities of London and Westminster with hay and straw. Capital, three millions.
81. For a sail and packing cloth manufactory in Ireland.
82. For taking up ballast.
83. For buying and fitting out ships to suppress pirates.
84. For the importation of timber from Wales. Capital, two millions.
85. For rock-salt.
86. For the transmutation of quicksilver into a malleable fine metal.

Besides these bubbles, many others sprang up daily, in spite of the condemnation of the government and the ridicule of the still sane portion of the public. The print-shops teemed with caricatures, and the newspapers with epigrams and satires, upon the prevalent folly. An ingenious card-maker published a pack of South Sea playing-cards, which are now extremely rare, each card containing, besides the usual figures, of a very small size, in one corner, a caricature of a bubble company, with appropriate verses underneath. One of the most famous bubbles was "Puckle's Machine Company," for discharging round and square cannon-balls and bullets, and making a total revolution in the art of war. Its pretensions to public favour were thus summed up, on the eight of spades:—

A rare invention to destroy the crowd
Of fools at home, instead of fools abroad.
Fear not, my friends, this terrible machine,
They're only wounded who have shares therein.

The nine of hearts was a caricature of the English Copper and Brass Company, with the following epigram:—

The headlong fool that wants to be a swopper
Of gold and silver coin for English copper,
May, in Change Alley, prove himself an ass,
And give rich metal for adulterate brass.

The eight of diamonds celebrated the Company for the Colonization of Acadia, with this doggrel:—

He that is rich and wants to fool away
A good round sum in North America,
Let him subscribe himself a headlong sharer,
And asses' ears shall honour him or bearer.

And in a similar style every card of the pack exposed some knavish scheme, and ridiculed the persons who were its dupes. It was computed that the total amount of the sums proposed for carrying on these projects was upwards of three hundred millions sterling, a sum so immense that it exceeded the value of all the lands in England at twenty years' purchase.

It is time, however, to return to the great South Sea gulf, that swallowed the fortunes of so many thousands of the avaricious and the credulous. On the 29th of April the stock had risen as high as five hundred, and about two-thirds of the government annuitants had exchanged the securities of the state for those of the South Sea Company. During the whole of the month of May, the stock continued to rise, and on the 28th it was quoted at five hundred and fifty. In four days after this it took a prodigious leap, rising suddenly from five hundred and fifty to eight hundred and ninety. It was now the general opinion that the stock could rise no higher, and many persons took that opportunity of selling out, with a view of realizing their profits. Many noblemen and persons in the train of the King, and about to accompany him to Hanover, were also anxious to sell out. So many sellers, and so few buyers, appeared in the Alley on the 3d of June, that the stock fell at once from eight hundred and ninety to six hundred and forty. The directors were alarmed, and gave their agents orders to buy. Their efforts succeeded. Towards evening confidence was restored, and the stock advanced to seven hundred and fifty. It continued at this price, with some slight fluctuation, until the Company closed their books on the 22d of June.

It would be needless and uninteresting to detail the various arts employed by the directors to keep up the price of stock. It will be sufficient to state that it finally rose to one thousand per cent. It was quoted at this price in the commencement of August. The bubble was then full-blown, and began to quiver and shake, preparatory to its bursting.

Many of the government annuitants expressed dissatisfaction against the directors. They accused them of partiality

in making out the lists for shares in each subscription. Further uneasiness was occasioned by its being generally known that Sir John Blunt, the chairman, and some others, had sold out. During the whole of the month of August the stock fell, and on the 2d of September, it was quoted at seven hundred only.

The state of things now became alarming. To prevent, if possible, the utter extinction of public confidence in their proceedings, the directors summoned a general court of the whole corporation, to meet in Merchant Tailors' Hall, on the 8th of September. By nine o'clock in the morning, the room was filled to suffocation; Cheapside was blocked up by a crowd unable to gain admittance, and the greatest excitement prevailed. The directors and their friends mustered in great numbers. Sir John Fellowes, the sub-governor, was called to the chair. He acquainted the assembly with the cause of their meeting, read to them the several resolutions of the court of directors, and gave them an account of their proceedings; of the taking in the redeemable and unredeemable funds, and of the subscriptions in money. Mr. Secretary Craggs then made a short speech, wherein he commended the conduct of the directors, and urged that nothing could more effectually contribute to the bringing this scheme to perfection than union among themselves. He concluded with a motion for thanking the Court of Directors for their prudent and skilful management, and for desiring them to proceed in such manner as they should think most proper for the interest and advantage of the corporation. Mr. Hungerford, who had rendered himself very conspicuous in the House of Commons for his zeal in behalf of the South Sea Company, and who was shrewdly suspected to have been a considerable gainer by knowing the right time to sell out, was very magniloquent on this occasion. He said that he had seen the rise and fall, the decay and resurrection of many communities of this nature, but that, in his opinion, none had ever performed such wonderful things in so short a time as the South Sea Company. They had done more than the crown, the pulpit, or the bench could do. They had reconciled all parties in one common interest; they had laid asleep, if not wholly extinguished, all the domestic jars and animosities of the nation. By the rise of their stock, moneyed men had vastly increased their for-

tunes; country gentlemen had seen the value of their lands doubled and trebled in their hands. They had at the same time done good to the Church, not a few of the reverend clergy having got great sums by the project. In short, they had enriched the whole nation, and he hoped they had not forgotten themselves. There was some hissing at the latter part of this speech, which for the extravagance of its eulogy was not far removed from satire; but the directors and their friends, and all the winners in the room, applauded vehemently. The Duke of Portland spoke in a similar strain, and expressed his great wonder why anybody should be dissatisfied: of course, he was a winner by his speculations, and in a condition similar to that of the fat alderman in Joe Miller's Jests, who, whenever he had eaten a good dinner, folded his hands upon his paunch, and expressed his doubts whether there could be a hungry man in the world.

Several resolutions were passed at this meeting, but they had no effect upon the public. Upon the very same evening the stock fell to six hundred and forty, and on the morrow to five hundred and forty. Day after day it continued to fall, until it was as low as four hundred. In a letter dated September 13th, from Mr. Broderick, M. P., to Lord Chancellor Middleton, and published in Coxe's Walpole, the former says, —"Various are the conjectures why the South Sea directors have suffered the cloud to break so early. I made no doubt but they would do so when they found it to their advantage. They have stretched credit so far beyond what it would bear, that specie proves insufficient to support it. Their most considerable men have drawn out, securing themselves by the losses of the deluded, thoughtless numbers, whose understandings have been overruled by avarice and the hope of making mountains out of mole-hills. Thousands of families will be reduced to beggary. The consternation is inexpressible—the rage beyond description, and the case altogether so desperate that I do not see any plan or scheme so much as thought of for averting the blow, so that I cannot pretend to guess what is next to be done." Ten days afterwards, the stock still falling, he writes,—"The Company have yet come to no determination, for they are in such a wood that they know not which way to turn. By several gentlemen lately come to town, I perceive the very name of a South-Sea-man

grows abominable in every country. A great many goldsmiths are already run off, and more will daily. I question whether one-third, nay, one-fourth, of them can stand it. From the very beginning, I founded my judgment of the whole affair upon the unquestionable maxim, that ten millions (which is more than our running cash) could not circulate two hundred millions, beyond which our paper credit extended. That, therefore, whenever that should become doubtful, be the cause what it would, our noble state machine must inevitably fall to the ground."

On the 12th of September, at the earnest solicitation of Mr. Secretary Craggs, several conferences were held between the directors of the South Sea and the directors of the Bank. A report which was circulated, that the latter had agreed to circulate six millions of the South Sea Company's bonds, caused the stock to rise to six hundred and seventy; but in the afternoon, as soon as the report was known to be groundless, the stock fell again to five hundred and eighty; the next day to five hundred and seventy, and so gradually to four hundred.*

The ministry were seriously alarmed at the aspect of affairs. The directors could not appear in the streets without being insulted; dangerous riots were every moment apprehended. Despatches were sent off to the King at Hanover, praying his immediate return. Mr. Walpole, who was staying at his country-seat, was sent for, that he might employ his known influence with the directors of the Bank of England to induce them to accept the proposal made by the South Sea Company for circulating a number of their bonds.

The Bank was very unwilling to mix itself up with the affairs of the Company; it dreaded being involved in calamities which it could not relieve, and received all overtures with

* Gay (the poet), in that disastrous year, had a present from young Craggs of some South Sea stock, and once supposed himself to be master of twenty thousand pounds. His friends persuaded him to sell his share, but he dreamed of dignity and splendour, and could not bear to obstruct his own fortune. He was then importuned to sell as much as would purchase a hundred a year for life, "which," says Fenton, "will make you sure of a clean shirt and a shoulder of mutton every day." This counsel was rejected; the profit and principal were lost, and Gay sunk under the calamity so low that his life became in danger.—*Johnson's Lives of the Poets.*

visible reluctance. But the universal voice of the nation called upon it to come to the rescue. Every person of note in commercial politics was called in to advise in the emergency. A rough draft of a contract drawn up by Mr. Walpole was ultimately adopted as the basis of further negotiations, and the public alarm abated a little.

On the following day, the 20th of September, a general court of the South Sea Company was held at Merchant Tailors' Hall, in which resolutions were carried, empowering the directors to agree with the Bank of England, or any other persons, to circulate the Company's bonds, or make any other agreement with the Bank which they should think proper. One of the speakers, a Mr. Pulteney, said it was most surprising to see the extraordinary panic which had seized upon the people. Men were running to and fro in alarm and terror, their imaginations filled with some great calamity, the form and dimensions of which nobody knew.

> "Black it stood as night—
> Fierce as ten furies—terrible as hell."

At a general court of the Bank of England held two days afterwards, the governor informed them of the several meetings that had been held on the affairs of the South Sea Company, adding that the directors had not yet thought fit to come to any decision upon the matter. A resolution was then proposed, and carried without a dissentient voice, empowering the directors to agree with those of the South Sea to circulate their bonds, to what sum, and upon what terms, and for what time, they might think proper.

Thus both parties were at liberty to act as they might judge best for the public interest. Books were opened at the Bank for a subscription of three millions for the support of public credit, on the usual terms of 15*l.* per cent. deposit, 3*l.* per cent. premium, and 5*l.* per cent. interest. So great was the concourse of people in the early part of the morning, all eagerly bringing their money, that it was thought the subscription would be filled that day; but before noon the tide turned. In spite of all that could be done to prevent it, the South Sea Company's stock fell rapidly. Their bonds were in such discredit, that a run commenced upon the most eminent goldsmiths and bankers, some of whom having lent out

great sums upon South Sea stock were obliged to shut up their shops and abscond. The Sword-blade Company, who had hitherto been the chief cashiers of the South Sea Company, stopped payment. This being looked upon as but the beginning of evil, occasioned a great run upon the Bank, who were now obliged to pay out money much faster than they had received it upon the subscription in the morning. The day succeeding was a holiday (the 29th of September), and the Bank had a little breathing time. They bore up against the storm; but their former rivals, the South Sea Company, were wrecked upon it. Their stock fell to one hundred and fifty, and gradually, after various fluctuations, to one hundred and thirty-five.

The Bank, finding they were not able to restore public confidence, and stem the tide of ruin, without running the risk of being swept away with those they intended to save, declined to carry out the agreement into which they had partially entered. They were under no obligation whatever to continue; for the so-called Bank contract was nothing more than the rough draft of an agreement, in which blanks had been left for several important particulars, and which contained no penalty for their secession. "And thus," to use the words of the Parliamentary History, "were seen, in the space of eight months, the rise, progress, and fall of that mighty fabric, which, being wound up by mysterious springs to a wonderful height, had fixed the eyes and expectations of all Europe, but whose foundation, being fraud, illusion, credulity, and infatuation, fell to the ground as soon as the artful management of its directors was discovered."

In the heyday of its blood, during the progress of this dangerous delusion, the manners of the nation became sensibly corrupted. The Parliamentary inquiry, set on foot to discover the delinquents, disclosed scenes of infamy, disgraceful alike to the morals of the offenders and the intellects of the people among whom they had arisen. It is a deeply interesting study to investigate all the evils that were the result. Nations, like individuals, cannot become desperate gamblers with impunity. Punishment is sure to overtake them sooner or later. A celebrated writer* is quite wrong,

* Smollett.

when he says, "that such an era as this is the most unfavourable for a historian; that no reader of sentiment and imagination can be entertained or interested by a detail of transactions such as these, which admit of no warmth, no colouring, no embellishment; a detail of which only serves to exhibit an inanimate picture of tasteless vice and mean degeneracy." On the contrary, and Smollett might have discovered it, if he had been in the humour—the subject is capable of inspiring as much interest as even a novelist can desire. Is there no warmth in the despair of a plundered people?—no life and animation in the picture which might be drawn in the woes of hundreds of impoverished and ruined families? of the wealthy of yesterday become the beggars of to-day? of the powerful and influential changed into exiles and outcasts, and the voice of self-reproach and imprecation resounding from every corner of the land? Is it a dull or uninstructive picture to see a whole people shaking suddenly off the trammels of reason, and running wild after a golden vision, refusing obstinately to believe that it is not real, till, like a deluded hind running after an *ignis fatuus*, they are plunged into a quagmire? But in this false spirit has history too often been written. The intrigues of unworthy courtiers to gain the favour of still more unworthy kings; or the records of murderous battles and sieges have been dilated on, and told over and over again, with all the eloquence of style and all the charms of fancy; while the circumstances which have most deeply affected the morals and welfare of the people, have been passed over with but slight notice as dry and dull, and capable of neither warmth nor colouring.

During the progress of this famous Bubble, England presented a singular spectacle. The public mind was in a state of unwholesome fermentation. Men were no longer satisfied with the slow but sure profits of cautious industry. The hope of boundless wealth for the morrow made them heedless and extravagant for to-day. A luxury, till then unheard-of, was introduced, bringing in its train a corresponding laxity of morals. The overbearing insolence of ignorant men, who had arisen to sudden wealth by successful gambling, made men of true gentility of mind and manners, blush that gold should have power to raise the unworthy in the scale of society. The haughtiness of some of these "cyphering

cits," as they were termed by Sir Richard Steele, was remembered against them in the day of their adversity. In the Parliamentary inquiry, many of the directors suffered more for their insolence than for their peculation. One of them, who, in the full-blown pride of an ignorant rich man, had said that he would feed his horse upon gold, was reduced almost to bread and water for himself; every haughty look, every overbearing speech, was set down, and repaid them a hundred fold in poverty and humiliation.

The state of matters all over the country was so alarming, that George I. shortened his intended stay in Hanover, and returned in all haste to England. He arrived on the 11th of November, and Parliament was summoned to meet on the 8th of December. In the mean time, public meetings were held in every considerable town of the empire, at which petitions were adopted, praying the vengeance of the legislature upon the South Sea directors, who, by their fraudulent practices, had brought the nation to the brink of ruin. Nobody seemed to imagine that the nation itself was as culpable as the South Sea Company. Nobody blamed the credulity and avarice of the people,—the degrading lust of gain, which had swallowed up every nobler quality in the national character, or the infatuation which had made the multitude run their heads with such frantic eagerness into the net held out for them by scheming projectors. These things were never mentioned. The people were a simple, honest, hard-working people, ruined by a gang of robbers, who were to be hanged, drawn, and quartered without mercy.

This was the almost unanimous feeling of the country. The two Houses of Parliament were not more reasonable. Before the guilt of the South Sea directors was known, punishment was the only cry. The King, in his speech from the throne, expressed his hope that they would remember that all their prudence, temper, and resolution were necessary to find out and apply the proper remedy for their misfortunes. In the debate on the answer to the address, several speakers indulged in the most violent invectives against the directors of the South Sea project. The Lord Molesworth was particularly vehement. "It had been said by some, that there was no law to punish the directors of the

South Sea Company, who were justly looked upon as the authors of the present misfortunes of the state. In his opinion they ought, upon this occasion, to follow the example of the ancient Romans, who, having no law against parricide, because their legislators supposed no son could be so unnaturally wicked as to imbrue his hands in his father's blood, made a law to punish this heinous crime as soon as it was committed. They adjudged the guilty wretch to be sown in a sack, and thrown alive into the Tiber. He looked upon the contrivers and executors of the villanous South Sea scheme as the parricides of their country, and should be satisfied to see them tied in like manner in sacks, and thrown into the Thames." Other members spoke with as much want of temper and discretion. Mr. Walpole was more moderate. He recommended that their first care should be to restore public credit. "If the city of London were on fire, all wise men would aid in extinguishing the flames, and preventing the spread of the conflagration before they inquired after the incendiaries. Public credit had received a dangerous wound, and lay bleeding, and they ought to apply a speedy remedy to it. It was time enough to punish the assassin afterwards." On the 9th of December, an address, in answer to his Majesty's speech, was agreed upon, after an amendment, which was carried without a division, that words should be added expressive of the determination of the House not only to seek a remedy for the national distresses, but to punish the authors of them.

The inquiry proceeded rapidly. The directors were ordered to lay before the House a full account of all their proceedings. Resolutions were passed to the effect that the calamity was mainly owing to the vile arts of stockjobbers, and that nothing could tend more to the re-establishment of public credit than a law to prevent this infamous practice. Mr. Walpole then rose, and said, that "as he had previously hinted, he had spent some time upon a scheme for restoring public credit, but that, the execution of it depending upon a position which had been laid down as fundamental, he thought it proper, before he opened out his scheme, to be informed whether he might rely upon that foundation. It was, whether the subscription of public debts and incumbrances, money subscriptions, and other contracts, made with the

South Sea Company should remain in the present state?" This question occasioned an animated debate. It was finally agreed, by a majority of 259 against 117, that all these contracts should remain in their present state, unless altered for the relief of the proprietors by a general court of the South Sea Company, or set aside by due course of law. On the following day Mr. Walpole laid before a committee of the whole House his scheme for the restoration of public credit, which was, in substance, to ingraft nine millions of South Sea stock into the Bank of England, and the same sum into the East India Company, upon certain conditions. The plan was favourably received by the House. After some few objections, it was ordered that proposals should be received from the two great corporations. They were both unwilling to lend their aid, and the plan met with a warm but fruitless opposition at the general courts summoned for the purpose of deliberating upon it. They, however, ultimately agreed upon the terms on which they would consent to circulate the South Sea bonds, and their report, being presented to the committee, a bill was brought in, under the superintendence of Mr. Walpole, and safely carried through both Houses of Parliament.

A bill was at the same time brought in, for restraining the South Sea directors, governor, sub-governor, treasurer, cashier, and clerks, from leaving the kingdom for a twelvemonth, and for discovering their estates and effects, and preventing them from transporting or alienating the same. All the most influential members of the House supported the bill. Mr. Shippen, seeing Mr. Secretary Craggs in his place, and believing the injurious rumours that were afloat of that minister's conduct in the South Sea business, determined to touch him to the quick. He said, he was glad to see a British House of Commons resuming its pristine vigour and spirit, and acting with so much unanimity for the public good. It was necessary to secure the persons and estates of the South Sea directors and their officers; "but," he added, looking fixedly at Mr. Craggs as he spoke, "there were other men in high station, whom, in time, he would not be afraid to name, who were no less guilty than the directors." Mr. Craggs arose in great wrath, and said, that if the innuendo were directed against him, he was ready to give satisfac-

tion to any man who questioned him, either in the House or out of it. Loud cries of order immediately arose on every side. In the midst of the uproar Lord Molesworth got up, and expressed his wonder at the boldness of Mr. Craggs in challenging the whole House of Commons. He, Lord Molesworth, though somewhat old, past sixty, would answer Mr. Craggs whatever he had to say in the House, and he trusted there were plenty of young men beside him, who would not be afraid to look Mr. Craggs in the face, out of the House. The cries of order again resounded from every side; the members arose simultaneously; everybody seemed to be vociferating at once. The Speaker in vain called order. The confusion lasted several minutes, during which Lord Molesworth and Mr. Craggs were almost the only members who kept their seats. At last the call for Mr. Craggs became so violent that he thought proper to submit to the universal feeling of the House, and explain his unparliamentary expression. He said, that by giving satisfaction to the impugners of his conduct in that House, he did not mean that he would fight, but that he would explain his conduct. Here the matter ended, and the House proceeded to debate in what manner they should conduct their inquiry into the affairs of the South Sea Company, whether in a grand or a select committee. Ultimately, a Secret Committee of thirteen was appointed, with power to send for persons, papers, and records.

The Lords were as zealous and as hasty as the Commons. The Bishop of Rochester said the scheme had been like a pestilence. The Duke of Wharton said the house ought to show no respect of persons; that, for his part, he would give up the dearest friend he had, if he had been engaged in the project. The nation had been plundered in a most shameful and flagrant manner, and he would go as far as anybody in the punishment of the offenders. Lord Stanhope said, that every farthing possessed by the criminals, whether directors or not directors, ought to be confiscated, to make good the public losses.

During all this time the public excitement was extreme. We learn, from Coxe's Walpole, that the very name of a South Sea director was thought to be synonymous with every species of fraud and villany. Petitions from counties, cities,

and boroughs, in all parts of the kingdom, were presented, crying for the justice due to an injured nation and the punishment of the villanous peculators. Those moderate men, who would not go to extreme lengths, even in the punishment of the guilty, were accused of being accomplices, were exposed to repeated insults and virulent invectives, and devoted, both in anonymous letters and public writings, to the speedy vengeance of an injured people. The accusations against Mr. Aislabie, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Craggs, another member of the ministry, were so loud, that the House of Lords resolved to proceed at once into the investigation concerning them. It was ordered, on the 21st of January, that all brokers concerned in the South Sea scheme should lay before the House an account of the stock or subscriptions bought or sold by them for any of the officers of the Treasury or Exchequer, or in trust for any of them, since Michaelmas, 1719. When this account was delivered, it appeared that large quantities of stock had been transferred to the use of Mr. Aislabie. Five of the South Sea directors, including Mr. Edward Gibbon, the grandfather of the celebrated historian, were ordered into the custody of the black rod. Upon a motion made by Earl Stanhope, it was unanimously resolved, that the taking in or giving credit for stock without a valuable consideration actually paid or sufficiently secured; or the purchasing stock by any director or agent of the South Sea Company, for the use or benefit of any member of the administration, or any member of either House of Parliament, during such time as the South Sea Bill was yet pending in Parliament, was a notorious and dangerous corruption. Another resolution was passed a few days afterwards, to the effect that several of the directors and officers of the Company having, in a clandestine manner, sold their own stock to the Company, had been guilty of a notorious fraud and breach of trust, and had thereby mainly caused the unhappy turn of affairs that had so much affected public credit. Mr. Aislabie resigned his office as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and absented himself from Parliament until the formal inquiry into his individual guilt was brought under the consideration of the Legislature.

In the mean time, Knight, the treasurer of the Company, and who was intrusted with all the dangerous secrets of the

dishonest directors, packed up his books and documents, and made his escape from the country. He embarked in disguise, in a small boat on the river, and proceeding to a vessel hired for the purpose, was safely conveyed to Calais. The Committee of Secrecy informed the House of the circumstance, when it was resolved unanimously that two addresses should be presented to the King; the first praying that he would issue a proclamation, offering a reward for the apprehension of Knight; and the second, that he would give immediate orders to stop the ports, and to take effectual care of the coasts, to prevent the said Knight, or any other officers of the South Sea Company from escaping out of the kingdom. The ink was hardly dry upon these addresses before they were carried to the King by Mr. Methuen, deputed by the House for that purpose. The same evening a royal proclamation was issued, offering a reward of two thousand pounds for the apprehension of Knight. The Commons ordered the doors of the House to be locked, and the keys to be placed upon the table. General Ross, one of the members of the Committee of Secrecy, acquainted them that they had already discovered a train of the deepest villany and fraud that Hell had ever contrived to ruin a nation, which in due time they would lay before the House. In the mean time, in order to a further discovery, the Committee thought it highly necessary to secure the persons of some of the directors and principal South Sea officers, and to seize their papers. A motion to this effect having been made, was carried unanimously. Sir Robert Chaplin, Sir Theodore Janssen, Mr. Sawbridge, and Mr. F. Eyles, members of the House, and directors of the South Sea Company, were summoned to appear in their places, and answer for their corrupt practices. Sir Theodore Janssen and Mr. Sawbridge answered to their names, and endeavoured to exculpate themselves. The House heard them patiently, and then ordered them to withdraw. A motion was then made, and carried *nemine contradicente*, that they had been guilty of a notorious breach of trust—had occasioned much loss to great numbers of his Majesty's subjects, and had highly prejudiced the public credit. It was then ordered that, for their offence, they should be expelled the House, and taken into the custody of the sergeant-at-arms. Sir Robert Chaplin and Mr. Eyles, attending in

their places four days afterwards, were also expelled the House. It was resolved at the same time to address the King, to give directions to his ministers at foreign courts to make application for Knight, that he might be delivered up to the English authorities, in case he took refuge in any of their dominions. The King at once agreed, and messengers were despatched to all parts of the continent the same night.

Among the directors taken into custody, was Sir John Blunt, the man whom popular opinion has generally accused of having been the original author and father of the scheme. This man, we are informed by Pope, in his epistle to Allen, Lord Bathurst, was a dissenter, of a most religious deportment, and professed to be a great believer. He constantly declaimed against the luxury and corruption of the age, the partiality of parliaments, and the misery of party spirit. He was particularly eloquent against avarice in great and noble persons. He was originally a scrivener, and afterwards became, not only a director, but the most active manager of the South Sea Company. Whether it was during his career in this capacity that he first began to declaim against the avarice of the great, we are not informed. He certainly must have seen enough of it to justify his severest anathema; but if the preacher had himself been free from the vice he condemned, his declamations would have had a better effect. He was brought up in custody to the bar of the House of Lords, and underwent a long examination. He refused to answer several important questions. He said he had been examined already by a committee of the House of Commons, and as he did not remember his answers, and might contradict himself, he refused to answer before another tribunal. This declaration, in itself an indirect proof of guilt, occasioned some commotion in the House. He was again asked peremptorily whether he had ever sold any portion of the stock to any member of the administration, or any member of either House of Parliament, to facilitate the passing of the bill. He again declined to answer. He was anxious, he said, to treat the House with all possible respect, but he thought it hard to be compelled to accuse himself. After several ineffectual attempts to refresh his memory, he was directed to withdraw. A violent discussion ensued between the friends and opponents of the ministry. It was asserted that the administra-

tion were no strangers to the convenient taciturnity of Sir John Blunt. The Duke of Wharton made a reflection upon the Earl Stanhope, which the latter warmly resented. He spoke under great excitement, and with such vehemence as to cause a sudden determination of blood to the head. He felt himself so ill that he was obliged to leave the House and retire to his chamber. He was cupped immediately, and also let blood on the following morning, but with slight relief. The fatal result was not anticipated. Towards evening he became drowsy, and turning himself on his face, expired. The sudden death of this statesman caused great grief to the nation. George I. was exceedingly affected, and shut himself up for some hours in his closet, inconsolable for his loss.

Knight, the treasurer of the company, was apprehended at Tirlemont, near Liege, by one of the secretaries of Mr. Leathes, the British resident at Brussels, and lodged in the citadel of Antwerp. Repeated applications were made to the court of Austria to deliver him up, but in vain. Knight threw himself upon the protection of the states of Brabant, and demanded to be tried in that country. It was a privilege granted to the states of Brabant by one of the articles of the *Joyeuse Entreé*, that every criminal apprehended in that country should be tried in that country. The states insisted on their privilege, and refused to deliver Knight to the British authorities. The latter did not cease their solicitations; but, in the mean time, Knight escaped from the citadel.

On the 16th of February the Committee of Secrecy made their first report to the House. They stated that their inquiry had been attended with numerous difficulties and embarrassments; every one they had examined had endeavoured, as far as in him lay, to defeat the ends of justice. In some of the books produced before them, false and fictitious entries had been made; in others, there were entries of money, with blanks for the name of the stockholders. There were frequent erasures and alterations, and in some of the books leaves were torn out. They also found that some books of great importance had been destroyed altogether, and that some had been taken away or secreted. At the very entrance into their inquiry, they had observed that the matters referred to them were of great variety and extent. Many persons had been intrusted with various parts in the execution of the law, and

under colour thereof had acted in an unwarrantable manner, in disposing of the properties of many thousands of persons, amounting to many millions of money. They discovered that, before the South Sea Act was passed, there was an entry in the Company's books of the sum of 1,259,325*l.* upon account of stock stated to have been sold to the amount of 574,500*l.* This stock was all fictitious, and had been disposed of with a view to promote the passing of the bill. It was noted as sold at various days, and at various prices, from 150 to 325 per cent. Being surprised to see so large an account disposed of, at a time when the Company were not empowered to increase their capital, the committee determined to investigate most carefully the whole transaction. The governor, sub-governor, and several directors were brought before them, and examined rigidly. They found that, at the time these entries were made, the Company was not in possession of such a quantity of stock, having in their own right only a small quantity, not exceeding thirty thousand pounds at the utmost. Pursuing the inquiry, they found that this amount of stock was to be esteemed as taken in or holden by the Company, for the benefit of the pretended purchasers, although no mutual agreement was made for its delivery or acceptance at any certain time. No money was paid down, nor any deposit or security whatever given to the Company by the supposed purchasers; so that if the stock had fallen, as might have been expected, had the act not passed, they would have sustained no loss. If, on the contrary, the price of stock advanced (as it actually did by the success of the scheme), the difference by the advanced price was to be made good to them. Accordingly, after the passing of the act, the account of stock was made up and adjusted with Mr. Knight, and the pretended purchasers were paid the difference out of the Company's cash. This fictitious stock, which had been chiefly at the disposal of Sir John Blunt, Mr. Gibbon, and Mr. Knight, was distributed among several members of the government and their connexions, by way of bribe, to facilitate the passing of the bill. To the Earl of Sunderland was assigned 50,000*l.* of this stock; to the Duchess of Kendal 10,000*l.*; to the Countess of Platen 10,000*l.*; to her two nieces 10,000*l.*; to Mr. Secretary Craggs 30,000*l.*; to Mr. Charles Stanhope (one of the Secretaries of the Treasury)

10,000*l.*; to the Sword-blade Company 50,000*l.* It also appeared that Mr. Stanhope had received the enormous sum of 250,000*l.* as the difference in the price of some stock, through the hands of Turner, Caswall, and Co., but that his name had been partly erased from their books, and altered to Stangape. Aislabie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had made profits still more abominable. He had an account with the same firm, who were also South Sea Directors, to the amount of 794,451*l.* He had, besides, advised the Company to make their second subscription one million and a half, instead of a million, by their own authority, and without any warrant. The third subscription had been conducted in a manner as disgraceful. Mr. Aislabie's name was down for 70,000*l.*; Mr. Craggs, senior, for 659,000*l.*; the Earl of Sunderland's for 160,000*l.*; and Mr. Stanhope for 47,000*l.* This report was succeeded by six others, less important. At the end of the last, the committee declared that the absence of Knight, who had been principally intrusted, prevented them from carrying on their inquiries.

The first report was ordered to be printed, and taken into consideration on the next day but one succeeding. After a very angry and animated debate, a series of resolutions were agreed to, condemnatory of the conduct of the directors, of the members of the Parliament and of the administration concerned with them; and declaring that they ought, each and all, to make satisfaction out of their own estates for the injury they had done the public. Their practices were declared to be corrupt, infamous, and dangerous; and a bill was ordered to be brought in for the relief of the unhappy sufferers.

Mr. Charles Stanhope was the first person brought to account for his share in these transactions. He urged in his defence that, for some years past, he had lodged all the money he was possessed of in Mr. Knight's hands, and whatever stock Mr. Knight had taken in for him, he had paid a valuable consideration for it. As to the stock that had been bought for him by Turner, Caswall, and Co., he knew nothing about it. Whatever had been done in that matter was done without his authority, and he could not be responsible for it. Turner and Co. took the latter charge upon themselves, but it was notorious to every unbiassed and unprejudiced person

that Mr. Stanhope was a gainer of the 250,000*l.* which lay in the hands of that firm to his credit. He was, however, acquitted by a majority of three only. The greatest exertions were made to screen him. Lord Stanhope, the son of the Earl of Chesterfield, went round to the wavering members, using all the eloquence he was possessed of to induce them either to vote for the acquittal or to absent themselves from the house. Many weak-headed country gentlemen were led astray by his persuasions, and the result was as already stated. The acquittal caused the greatest discontent throughout the country. Mobs of a menacing character assembled in different parts of London; fears of riots were generally entertained, especially as the examination of a still greater delinquent was expected by many to have a similar termination. Mr. Aislabie, whose high office and deep responsibilities should have kept him honest, even had native principle been insufficient, was very justly regarded as perhaps the greatest criminal of all. His case was entered into on the day succeeding the acquittal of Mr. Stanhope. Great excitement prevailed, and the lobbies and avenues of the House were beset by crowds, impatient to know the result. The debate lasted the whole day. Mr. Aislabie found few friends; his guilt was so apparent and so heinous that nobody had courage to stand up in his favour. It was finally resolved, without a dissentient voice, that Mr. Aislabie had encouraged and promoted the destructive execution of the South Sea scheme with a view to his own exorbitant profit, and had combined with the directors in their pernicious practices to the ruin of the public trade and credit of the kingdom: that he should for his offences be ignominiously expelled from the House of Commons, and committed a close prisoner to the Tower of London; that he should be restrained from going out of the kingdom for a whole year, or till the end of the next session of Parliament; and that he should make out a correct account of all his estate, in order that it might be applied to the relief of those who had suffered by his mal-practices.

This verdict caused the greatest joy. Though it was delivered at half past twelve at night, it soon spread over the city. Several persons illuminated their houses in token of their joy. On the following day, when Mr. Aislabie was conveyed to the Tower, the mob assembled on Tower Hill with

the intention of hooting and pelting him. Not succeeding in this, they kindled a large bonfire, and danced around it in the exuberance of their delight. Several bonfires were made in other places; London presented the appearance of a holiday, and people congratulated one another as if they had just escaped from some great calamity. The rage upon the acquittal of Mr. Stanhope had grown to such a height, that none could tell where it would have ended, had Mr. Aislabie met with the like indulgence.

To increase the public satisfaction, Sir George Caswall, of the firm of Turner, Caswall & Co. was expelled the House on the following day, and ordered to refund the sum of 250,000*l.*

That part of the report of the Committee of Secrecy which related to the Earl of Sunderland was next taken into consideration. Every effort was made to clear his Lordship from the imputation. As the case against him rested chiefly on the evidence extorted from Sir John Blunt, great pains were taken to make it appear that Sir John's word was not to be believed, especially in a matter affecting the honour of a peer and privy councillor. All the friends of the ministry rallied around the Earl, it being generally reported that a verdict of guilty against him would bring a Tory ministry into power. He was eventually acquitted, by a majority of 233 against 172; but the country was convinced of his guilt. The greatest indignation was everywhere expressed, and menacing mobs again assembled in London. Happily no disturbances took place.

This was the day on which Mr. Craggs, the elder, expired. The morrow had been appointed for the consideration of his case. It was very generally believed that he had poisoned himself. It appeared, however, that grief for the loss of his son, one of the Secretaries of the Treasury, who had died five weeks previously of the small-pox, preyed much on his mind. For this son, dearly beloved, he had been amassing vast heaps of riches: he had been getting money, but not honestly; and he for whose sake he had bartered his honour and sullied his fame, was now no more. The dread of further exposure increased his trouble of mind, and ultimately brought on an apoplectic fit, in which he expired. He left a fortune of a million and a half, which was afterwards confiscated for

the benefit of the sufferers by the unhappy delusion he had been so mainly instrumental in raising.

One by one the case of every director of the Company was taken into consideration. A sum amounting to two millions and fourteen thousand pounds was confiscated from their estates towards repairing the mischief they had done, each man being allowed a certain residue, in proportion to his conduct and circumstances, with which he might begin the world anew. Sir John Blunt was only allowed 5000*l.* out of his fortune of upwards of 183,000*l.*; Sir John Fellowes was allowed 10,000*l.* out of 243,000*l.*; Sir Theodore Janssen, 50,000*l.* out of 243,000*l.*; Mr. Edward Gibbon, 10,000*l.* out of 106,000*l.*; Sir John Lambert, 5000*l.* out of 72,000*l.* Others, less deeply involved, were treated with greater liberality. Gibbon, the historian, whose grandfather was the Mr. Edward Gibbon so severely mulcted, has given, in the Memoirs of his Life and Writings, an interesting account of the proceedings in Parliament at this time. He owns that he is not an unprejudiced witness; but, as all the writers from which it is possible to extract any notice of the proceedings of these disastrous years, were prejudiced on the other side, the statements of the great historian become of additional value. If only on the principle of *audi alteram partem*, his opinion is entitled to consideration. "In the year 1716," he says, "my grandfather was elected one of the directors of the South Sea Company, and his books exhibited the proof that before his acceptance of that fatal office, he had acquired an independent fortune of 60,000*l.* But his fortune was overwhelmed in the shipwreck of the year twenty, and the labours of thirty years were blasted in a single day. Of the use or abuse of the South Sea scheme, of the guilt or innocence of my grandfather and his brother directors, I am neither a competent nor a disinterested judge. Yet the equity of modern times must condemn the violent and arbitrary proceedings, which would have disgraced the cause of justice, and rendered injustice still more odious. No sooner had the nation awakened from its golden dream, than a popular, and even a Parliamentary clamour, demanded its victims; but it was acknowledged on all sides, that the directors, however guilty, could not be touched by any known laws of the land. The intemperate notions of Lord Molesworth were not literally

acted on; but a bill of pains and penalties was introduced—a retro-active statute, to punish the offences which did not exist at the time they were committed. The Legislature restrained the persons of the directors, imposed an exorbitant security for their appearance, and marked their character with a previous note of ignominy. They were compelled to deliver, upon oath, the strict value of their estates, and were disabled from making any transfer or alienation of any part of their property. Against a bill of pains and penalties, it is the common right of every subject to be heard by his counsel at the bar. They prayed to be heard. Their prayer was refused, and their oppressors, who required no evidence, would listen to no defence. It had been at first proposed, that one-eighth of their respective estates should be allowed for the future support of the directors; but it was speciously urged, that in the various shades of opulence and guilt, such a proportion would be too light for many, and for some might possibly be too heavy. The character and conduct of each man were separately weighed; but, instead of the calm solemnity of a judicial inquiry, the fortune and honour of thirty-three Englishmen were made the topics of hasty conversation, the sport of a lawless majority; and the basest member of the committee, by a malicious word, or a silent vote, might indulge his general spleen or personal animosity. Injury was aggravated by insult, and insult was embittered by pleasantry. Allowances of 20*l.* or 1*s.* were facetiously moved. A vague report that a director had formerly been concerned in another project, by which some unknown persons had lost their money, was admitted as a proof of his actual guilt. One man was ruined because he had dropped a foolish speech, that his horses should feed upon gold; another, because he was grown so proud, that one day, at the Treasury, he had refused a civil answer to persons much above him. All were condemned, absent and unheard, in arbitrary fines and forfeitures, which swept away the greatest part of their substance. Such bold oppression can scarcely be shielded by the omnipotence of Parliament. My grandfather could not expect to be treated with more lenity than his companions. His Tory principles and connexions rendered him obnoxious to the ruling powers. His name was reported in a suspicious secret. His well-known abilities could not plead the excuse of ignorance or

error. In the first proceedings against the South Sea directors, Mr. Gibbon was one of the first taken into custody, and in the final sentence the measure of his fine proclaimed him eminently guilty. The total estimate, which he delivered on oath to the House of Commons, amounted to 106,543*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.*, exclusive of antecedent settlements. Two different allowances of 15,000*l.* and of 10,000*l.* were moved for Mr. Gibbon; but, on the question's being put, it was carried without a division for the smaller sum. On these ruins, with the skill and credit of which Parliament had not been able to despoil him, my grandfather, at a mature age, erected the edifice of a new fortune. The labours of sixteen years were amply rewarded; and I have reason to believe that the second structure was not much inferior to the first."

The next consideration of the Legislature, after the punishment of the directors, was to restore public credit. The scheme of Walpole had been found insufficient, and had fallen into disrepute. A computation was made of the whole capital stock of the South Sea Company at the end of the year 1720. It was found to amount to thirty-seven millions eight hundred thousand pounds, of which the stock allotted to all the proprietors only amounted to twenty-four millions five hundred thousand pounds. The remainder of thirteen millions three hundred thousand pounds belonged to the Company in their corporate capacity, and was the profit they had made by the national delusion. Upwards of eight millions of this were taken from the Company, and divided among the proprietors and subscribers generally, making a dividend of about 33*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per cent. This was a great relief. It was further ordered, that such persons as had borrowed money from the South Sea Company upon stock actually transferred and pledged at the time of borrowing to or for the use of the Company, should be free from all demands, upon payment of ten per cent. of the sums so borrowed. They had lent about eleven millions in this manner, at a time when prices were unnaturally raised; and they now received back one million one hundred thousand, when prices had sunk to their ordinary level.

But it was a long time before public credit was thoroughly restored. Enterprise, like Icarus, had soared too high, and melted the wax of her wings; like Icarus, she had fallen into

a sea, and learned, while floundering in its waves, that her proper element was the solid ground. She has never since attempted so high a flight.

In times of great commercial prosperity there has been a tendency to over speculation on several occasions since then. The success of one project generally produces others of a similar kind. Popular imitativeness will always, in a trading nation, seize hold of such successes, and drag a community too anxious for profits into an abyss from which extrication is difficult. Bubble companies, of a kind similar to those engendered by the South Sea project, lived their little day in the famous year of the panic, 1825. On that occasion, as in 1720, knavery gathered a rich harvest from cupidity, but both suffered when the day of reckoning came. The schemes of the year 1836 threatened, at one time, results as disastrous; but they were happily averted before it was too late. The South Sea project thus remains, and, it is to be hoped, always will remain, the greatest example in British history, of the infatuation of the people for commercial gambling. From the bitter experience of that period, posterity may learn how dangerous it is to let speculation riot unrestrained, and to hope for enormous profits from inadequate causes. Degrading as were the circumstances, there is wisdom to be gained from the lesson which they teach.

THE TULIPOMANIA.

Quis furor, ô cives!—LUCAN.

THE tulip,—so named, it is said, from a Turkish word, signifying a turban,—was introduced into western Europe about the middle of the sixteenth century. Conrad Gesner, who claims the merit of having brought it into repute,—little dreaming of the extraordinary commotion it was to make in the world,—says that he first saw it in the year 1559, in a garden at Augsburg, belonging to the learned Counsellor Herwart, a man very famous in his day for his collection of rare exotics. The bulbs were sent to this gentleman by a friend at Constantinople, where the flower had long been a favourite. In the course of ten or eleven years after this period, tulips were much sought after by the wealthy, especially in Holland and Germany. Rich people at Amsterdam sent for the bulbs direct to Constantinople, and paid the most extravagant prices for them. The first roots planted in England were brought from Vienna in 1600. Until the year 1634 the tulip annually increased in reputation, until it was deemed a proof of bad taste in any man of fortune to be without a collection of them. Many learned men, including Pompeius de Angelis and the celebrated Lipsius of Leyden, the author of the treatise "De Constantia," were passionately fond of tulips. The rage for possessing them soon caught the middle classes of society, and merchants and shopkeepers, even of moderate means, began to vie with each other in the rarity of these flowers and the preposterous prices they paid for them. A trader at Harlaem was known to pay one half of his fortune for a single root—not with the design of selling it again at a profit, but to keep in his own conservatory for the admiration of his acquaintance.

One would suppose that there must have been some great

virtue in this flower to have made it so valuable in the eyes of so prudent a people as the Dutch; but it has neither the beauty nor the perfume of the rose—hardly the beauty of the "sweet, sweet-pea;" neither is it as enduring as either. Cowley, it is true, is loud in its praise. He says—

> "The tulip next appeared, all over gay,
> But wanton, full of pride, and full of play;
> The world can't show a dye but here has place;
> Nay, by new mixtures, she can change her face;
> Purple and gold are both beneath her care—
> The richest needlework she loves to wear;
> Her only study is to please the eye,
> And to outshine the rest in finery."

This, though not very poetical, is the description of a poet. Beckmann, in his History of Inventions, paints it with more fidelity, and in prose more pleasing than Cowley's poetry. He says: "There are few plants which acquire, through accident, weakness, or disease, so many variegations as the tulip. When uncultivated, and in its natural state, it is almost of one colour, has large leaves, and an extraordinarily long stem. When it has been weakened by cultivation, it becomes more agreeable in the eyes of the florist. The petals are then paler, smaller, and more diversified in hue; and the leaves acquire a softer green colour. Thus, this masterpiece of culture, the more beautiful it turns, grows so much the weaker, so that, with the greatest skill and most careful attention, it can scarcely be transplanted, or even kept alive."

Many persons grow insensibly attached to that which gives them a great deal of trouble, as a mother often loves her sick and ever-ailing child better than her more healthy offspring. Upon the same principle we must account for the unmerited encomia lavished upon these fragile blossoms. In 1634, the rage among the Dutch to possess them was so great that the ordinary industry of the country was neglected, and the population, even to its lowest dregs, embarked in the tulip trade. As the mania increased, prices augmented, until, in the year 1635, many persons were known to invest a fortune of 100,000 florins in the purchase of forty roots. It then became necessary to sell them by their weight in *perits*, a small weight less than a grain. A tulip of the species called *Admiral Liefken*, weighing 400 *perits*, was worth 4400 florins;

an *Admiral Von der Eyk*, weighing 446 *perits*, was worth 1260 florins; a *shilder* of 106 *perits* was worth 1615 florins; a *viceroy* of 400 *perits*, 3000 florins, and, most precious of all, a *Semper Augustus*, weighing 200 *perits*, was thought to be very cheap at 5500 florins. The latter was much sought after, and even an inferior bulb might command a price of 2000 florins. It is related that, at one time, early in 1636, there were only two roots of this description to be had in all Holland, and those not of the best. One was in the possession of a dealer in Amsterdam, and the other in Harlaem. So anxious were the speculators to obtain them that one person offered the fee-simple of twelve acres of building ground for the Harlaem tulip. That of Amsterdam was bought for 4600 florins, a new carriage, two gray horses, and a complete suit of harness. Munting, an industrious author of that day, who wrote a folio volume of one thousand pages upon the Tulipomania, has preserved the following list of the various articles, and their value, which were delivered for one single root of the rare species called the *viceroy*:—

	florins.
Two lasts of wheat	448
Four lasts of rye	558
Four fat oxen	480
Eight fat swine	240
Twelve fat sheep	120
Two hogsheads of wine	70
Four tuns of beer	32
Two tuns of butter	192
One thousand lbs. of cheese	120
A complete bed	100
A suit of clothes	80
A silver drinking-cup	60
	2500

People who had been absent from Holland, and whose chance it was to return when this folly was at its maximum, were sometimes led into awkward dilemmas by their ignorance. There is an amusing instance of the kind related in Blainville's Travels. A wealthy merchant, who prided himself not a little on his rare tulips, received upon one occasion a very valuable consignment of merchandise from the Levant. Intelligence of its arrival was brought him by a sailor, who presented himself for that purpose at the counting-house,

among bales of goods of every description. The merchant, to reward him for his news, munificently made him a present of a fine red herring for his breakfast. The sailor had, it appears, a great partiality for onions, and seeing a bulb very like an onion lying upon the counter of this liberal trader, and thinking it, no doubt, very much out of its place among silks and velvets, he slily seized an opportunity and slipped it into his pocket, as a relish for his herring. He got clear off with his prize, and proceeded to the quay to eat his breakfast. Hardly was his back turned when the merchant missed his valuable *Semper Augustus*, worth three thousand florins, or about 280*l.* sterling. The whole establishment was instantly in an uproar; search was everywhere made for the precious root, but it was not to be found. Great was the merchant's distress of mind. The search was renewed, but again without success. At last some one thought of the sailor.

The unhappy merchant sprang into the street at the bare suggestion. His alarmed household followed him. The sailor, simple soul! had not thought of concealment. He was found quietly sitting on a coil of ropes, masticating the last morsel of his "*onion.*" Little did he dream that he had been eating a breakfast whose cost might have regaled a whole ship's crew for a twelvemonth; or, as the plundered merchant himself expressed it, "might have sumptuously feasted the Prince of Orange and the whole court of the Stadtholder." Anthony caused pearls to be dissolved in wine to drink the health of Cleopatra; Sir Richard Whittington was as foolishly magnificent in an entertainment to King Henry V.; and Sir Thomas Gresham drank a diamond, dissolved in wine, to the health of Queen Elizabeth, when she opened the Royal Exchange; but the breakfast of this roguish Dutchman was as splendid as either. He had an advantage, too, over his wasteful predecessors; *their* gems did not improve the taste or the wholesomeness of *their* wine, while *his* tulip was quite delicious with his red herring. The most unfortunate part of the business for him was, that he remained in prison for some months, on a charge of felony, preferred against him by the merchant.

Another story is told of an English traveller, which is scarcely less ludicrous. This gentleman, an amateur bota-

nist, happened to see a tulip-root lying in the conservatory of a wealthy Dutchman. Being ignorant of its quality, he took out his penknife, and peeled off its coats, with the view of making experiments upon it. When it was by this means reduced to half its original size, he cut it into two equal sections, making all the time many learned remarks on the singular appearances of the unknown bulb. Suddenly the owner pounced upon him, and, with fury in his eyes, asked him if he knew what he had been doing? "Peeling a most extraordinary onion," replied the philosopher. "*Hundert tausend duyvel*," said the Dutchman; "it's an Admiral *Van der Eyck*." "Thank you," replied the traveller, taking out his note-book to make a memorandum of the same; "are these admirals common in your country?" "Death and the devil," said the Dutchman, seizing the astonished man of science by the collar; "come before the syndic, and you shall see." In spite of his remonstrances, the traveller was led through the streets, followed by a mob of persons. When brought into the presence of the magistrate, he learned, to his consternation, that the root upon which he had been experimentalizing was worth four thousand florins; and notwithstanding all he could urge in extenuation, he was lodged in prison until he found securities for the payment of this sum.

The demand for tulips of a rare species increased so much in the year 1636, that regular marts for their sale were established on the Stock Exchange of Amsterdam, in Rotterdam, Harlaem, Leyden, Alkmar, Hoorn, and other towns. Symptoms of gambling now became, for the first time, apparent. The stockjobbers, ever on the alert for a new speculation, dealt largely in tulips, making use of all the means they so well knew how to employ, to cause fluctuations in prices. At first, as in all these gambling mania, confidence was at its height, and everybody gained. The tulip-jobbers speculated in the rise and fall of the tulip stocks, and made large profits by buying when prices fell, and selling out when they rose. Many individuals grew suddenly rich. A golden bait hung temptingly out before the people, and, one after the other, they rushed to the tulip marts, like flies around a honey-pot. Every one imagined that the passion for tulips would last for ever, and that the wealthy from every part of

the world would send to Holland, and pay whatever prices were asked for them. The riches of Europe would be concentrated on the shores of the Zuyder Zee, and poverty banished from the favoured clime of Holland. Nobles, citizens, farmers, mechanics, seamen, footmen, maid-servants, even chimney-sweeps and old clothes-women, dabbled in tulips. People of all grades converted their property into cash, and invested it in flowers. Houses and lands were offered for sale at ruinously low prices, or assigned in payment of bargains made at the tulip-mart. Foreigners became smitten with the same frenzy, and money poured into Holland from all directions. The prices of the necessaries of life rose again by degrees; houses and lands, horses and carriages, and luxuries of every sort, rose in value with them, and for some months Holland seemed the very antechamber of Plutus. The operations of the trade became so extensive and so intricate, that it was found necessary to draw up a code of laws for the guidance of the dealers. Notaries and clerks were also appointed, who devoted themselves exclusively to the interests of the trade. The designation of public notary was hardly known in some towns, that of tulip notary usurping its place. In the smaller towns, where there was no exchange, the principal tavern was usually selected as the "showplace," where high and low traded in tulips, and confirmed their bargains over sumptuous entertainments. These dinners were sometimes attended by two or three hundred persons, and large vases of tulips, in full bloom, were placed at regular intervals upon the tables and sideboards, for their gratification during the repast.

At last, however, the more prudent began to see that this folly could not last for ever. Rich people no longer bought the flowers to keep them in their gardens, but to sell them again at cent. per cent. profit. It was seen that somebody must lose fearfully in the end. As this conviction spread, prices fell, and never rose again. Confidence was destroyed, and a universal panic seized upon the dealers. *A* had agreed to purchase ten *Sempers Augustines* from *B*, at four thousand florins each, at six weeks after the signing of the contract. *B* was ready with the flowers at the appointed time; but the price had fallen to three or four hundred florins, and *A* refused either to pay the difference or receive

the tulips. Defaulters were announced day after day in all the towns of Holland. Hundreds who, a few months previously, had begun to doubt that there was such a thing as poverty in the land, suddenly found themselves the possessors of a few bulbs, which nobody would buy, even though they offered them at one quarter of the sums they had paid for them. The cry of distress resounded everywhere, and each man accused his neighbour. The few who had contrived to enrich themselves hid their wealth from the knowledge of their fellow-citizens, and invested it in the English or other funds. Many who, for a brief season, had emerged from the humbler walks of life, were cast back into their original obscurity. Substantial merchants were reduced almost to beggary, and many a representative of a noble line saw the fortunes of his house ruined beyond redemption.

When the first alarm subsided, the tulip-holders in the several towns held public meetings to devise what measures were best to be taken to restore public credit. It was generally agreed, that deputies should be sent from all parts to Amsterdam, to consult with the government upon some remedy for the evil. The government at first refused to interfere, but advised the tulip-holders to agree to some plan among themselves. Several meetings were held for this purpose; but no measure could be devised likely to give satisfaction to the deluded people, or repair even a slight portion of the mischief that had been done. The language of complaint and reproach was in everybody's mouth, and all the meetings were of the most stormy character. At last, however, after much bickering and ill-will, it was agreed, at Amsterdam, by the assembled deputies, that all contracts made in the height of the mania, or prior to the month of November, 1636, should be declared null and void, and that, in those made after that date, purchasers should be freed from their engagements, on paying ten per cent. to the vendor. This decision gave no satisfaction. The vendors who had their tulips on hand were, of course, discontented, and those who had pledged themselves to purchase, thought themselves hardly treated. Tulips which had, at one time, been worth six thousand florins, were now to be procured for five hundred; so that the composition of ten per cent. was one hundred florins more than the actual

value. Actions for breach of contract were threatened in all the courts of the country; but the latter refused to take cognizance of gambling transactions.

The matter was finally referred to the Provincial Council at the Hague, and it was confidently expected that the wisdom of this body would invent some measure by which credit should be restored. Expectation was on the stretch for its decision, but it never came. The members continued to deliberate week after week, and at last, after thinking about it for three months, declared that they could offer no final decision until they had more information. They advised, however, that, in the mean time, every vendor should, in the presence of witnesses, offer the tulips *in natura* to the purchaser for the sums agreed upon. If the latter refused to take them, they might be put up for sale by public auction, and the original contractor held responsible for the difference between the actual and the stipulated price. This was exactly the plan recommended by the deputies, and which was already shown to be of no avail. There was no court in Holland which would enforce payment. The question was raised in Amsterdam, but the judges unanimously refused to interfere, on the ground that debts contracted in gambling were no debts in law.

Thus the matter rested. To find a remedy was beyond the power of the government. Those who were unlucky enough to have had stores of tulips on hand at the time of the sudden reaction were left to bear their ruin as philosophically as they could; those who had made profits were allowed to keep them; but the commerce of the country suffered a severe shock, from which it was many years ere it recovered.

The example of the Dutch was imitated to some extent in England. In the year 1636, tulips were publicly sold in the Exchange of London, and the jobbers exerted themselves to the utmost to raise them to the fictitious value they had acquired in Amsterdam. In Paris also the jobbers strove to create a tulipomania. In both cities they only partially succeeded. However, the force of example brought the flowers into great favour, and amongst a certain class of people tulips have ever since been prized more highly than any other flowers of the field. The Dutch are still notorious for their partiality to them, and continue to pay higher prices for them

than any other people. As the rich Englishman boasts of his fine race-horses or his old pictures, so does the wealthy Dutchman vaunt him of his tulips.

In England, in our day, strange as it may appear, a tulip will produce more money than an oak. If one could be found, *rara in terris*, and black as the black swan alluded to by Juvenal, its price would equal that of a dozen acres of standing corn. In Scotland, towards the close of the seventeenth century, the highest price for tulips, according to the authority of a writer in the supplement to the third edition of the "Encyclopedia Britannica," was ten guineas. Their value appears to have diminished from that time till the year 1769, when the two most valuable species in England were the *Don Quevedo* and the *Valentinier*, the former of which was worth two guineas and the latter two guineas and a half. These prices appear to have been the minimum. In the year 1800, a common price was fifteen guineas for a single bulb. In 1835, so foolish were the fanciers, that a bulb of the species called the Miss Fanny Kemble was sold by public auction in London for seventy-five pounds. Still more astonishing was the price of a tulip in the possession of a gardener in the King's Road, Chelsea. In his catalogues, it was labelled at two hundred guineas! Thus a flower, which for beauty and perfume was surpassed by the abundant roses of the garden,—a nosegay of which might be purchased for a penny,—was priced at a sum which would have provided an industrious labourer and his family with food, and clothes, and lodging for six years! Should chickweed and groundsel ever come into fashion, the wealthy would, no doubt, vie with each other in adorning their gardens with them, and paying the most extravagant prices for them. In so doing, they would hardly be more foolish than the admirers of tulips. The common prices for these flowers at the present time vary from five to fifteen guineas, according to the rarity of the species.

RELICS.

A fouth o' auld knick-knackets,
Rusty airn caps and jinglin' jackets,
Wad haud the Lothians three, in tackets,
A towmond guid;
An' parritch pats, and auld saut backets,
Afore the flood.
BURNS.

THE love for relics is one which will never be eradicated as long as feeling and affection are denizens of the heart. It is a love which is most easily excited in the best and kindliest natures, and which few are callous enough to scoff at. Who would not treasure the lock of hair that once adorned the brow of the faithful wife, now cold in death, or that hung down the neck of a beloved infant, now sleeping under the sward? Not one. They are home-relics, whose sacred worth is intelligible to all;—spoils rescued from the devouring grave, which, to the affectionate, are beyond all price. How dear to a forlorn survivor the book over whose pages he has pored with one departed! How much greater its value, if that hand, now cold, had written a thought, an opinion, or a name, upon the leaf! Besides these sweet, domestic relics, there are others, which no one can condemn; relics sanctified by that admiration of greatness and goodness which is akin to love; such as the copy of Montaigne's Florio, with the name of Shakspeare upon the leaf, written by the poet of all time himself; the chair preserved at Antwerp, in which Rubens sat when he painted the immortal "Descent from the Cross;" or the telescope, preserved in the Museum of Florence, which aided Galileo in his sublime discoveries. Who would not look with veneration upon the undoubted arrow of William Tell—the swords of Wallace or of Hampden—or the Bible whose leaves were turned by some stern old father of the faith?

Thus the principle of reliquism is hallowed and enshrined by love. But from this germ of purity how numerous the progeny of errors and superstitions! Men, in their admiration of the great, and of all that appertained to them, have forgotten that goodness is a component part of true greatness, and have made fools of themselves for the jaw-bone of a saint, the toe-nail of an apostle, the handkerchief a king blew his nose in, or the rope that hanged a criminal. Desiring to rescue some slight token from the graves of their predecessors, they have confounded the famous and the infamous, the renowned and the notorious. Great saints, great sinners; great philosophers, great quacks; great conquerors, great murderers; great ministers, great thieves: each and all have had their admirers, ready to ransack earth, from the equator to either pole, to find a relic of them.

The reliquism of modern times dates its origin from the centuries immediately preceding the Crusades. The first pilgrims to the Holy Land brought back to Europe thousands of apocryphal relics, in the purchase of which they had expended all their store. The greatest favourite was the wood of the true cross, which, like the oil of the widow, never diminished. It is generally asserted, in the traditions of the Romish Church, that the Empress Helen, the mother of Constantine the Great, first discovered the veritable "*true cross*" in her pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The Emperor Theodosius made a present of the greater part of it to St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, by whom it was studded with precious stones, and deposited in the principal church of that city. It was carried away by the Huns, by whom it was burnt, after they had extracted the valuable jewels it contained. Fragments, purporting to have been cut from it were, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, to be found in almost every church in Europe, and would, if collected together in one place, have been almost sufficient to have built a cathedral. Happy was the sinner who could get a sight of one of them; happier he who possessed one! To obtain them the greatest dangers were cheerfully braved. They were thought to preserve from all evils, and to cure the most inveterate diseases. Annual pilgrimages were made to the shrines that contained them, and considerable revenues collected from the devotees.

Next in renown were those precious relics, the tears of the

Saviour. By whom and in what manner they were preserved, the pilgrims did not often inquire. Their genuineness was vouched by the Christians of the Holy Land, and that was sufficient. Tears of the Virgin Mary, and tears of St. Peter, were also to be had, carefully enclosed in little caskets, which the pious might wear in their bosoms. After the tears the next most precious relics were drops of the blood of Jesus and the martyrs. Hair and toe-nails were also in great repute, and were sold at extravagant prices. Thousands of pilgrims annually visited Palestine in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, to purchase pretended relics for the home market. The majority of them had no other means of subsisting than from the profits thus obtained. Many a nail, cut from the filthy foot of some unscrupulous ecclesiastic, was sold at a diamond's price, within six months after its severance from its parent toe, upon the supposition that it had once belonged to a saint. Peter's toes were uncommonly prolific, for there were nails enough in Europe, at the time of the Council of Clermont, to have filled a sack, all of which were devoutly believed to have grown on the sacred feet of that great apostle. Some of them are still shown in the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle. The pious come from a distance of a hundred German miles to feast their eyes upon them.

At Port Royal, in Paris, is kept with great care a thorn, which the priests of that seminary assert to be one of the identical thorns that bound the holy head of the Son of God. How it came there, and by whom it was preserved, has never been explained. This is the famous thorn, celebrated in the long dissensions of the Jansenists and the Molenists, and which worked the miraculous cure upon Mademoiselle Perrier: by merely kissing it, she was cured of a disease of the eyes of long standing.*

What traveller is unacquainted with the Santa Scala, or Holy Stairs, at Rome? They were brought from Jerusalem along with the true cross, by the Empress Helen, and were taken from the house which, according to popular tradition, was inhabited by Pontius Pilate. They are said to be the steps which Jesus ascended and descended when brought into the presence of the Roman governor. They are held in the

* Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV.

greatest veneration at Rome: it is sacrilegious to walk upon them. The knees of the faithful must alone touch them in ascending or descending, and that only after they have reverentially kissed them.

Europe still swarms with these religious relics. There is hardly a Roman Catholic church in Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, or Belgium, without one or more of them. Even the poorly endowed churches of the villages boast the possession of miraculous thigh-bones of the innumerable saints of the Romish calendar. Aix-la-Chapelle is proud of the veritable *châsse*, or thigh-bone of Charlemagne, which cures lameness. Halle has a thigh-bone of the Virgin Mary; Spain has seven or eight, all said to be undoubted relics. Brussels at one time preserved, and perhaps does now, the teeth of St. Gudule. The faithful, who suffered from the tooth-ache, had only to pray, look at them, and be cured. Some of these holy bones have been buried in different parts of the Continent. After a certain lapse of time, water is said to ooze from them, which soon forms a spring, and cures all the diseases of the faithful. At a church in Halle, there is a famous thigh-bone, which cures barrenness in women. Of this bone, which is under the special superintendence of the Virgin, a pleasant story is related by the incredulous. There resided at Ghent a couple who were blessed with all the riches of this world, but whose happiness was sore troubled by the want of children. Great was the grief of the lady, who was both beautiful and loving, and many her lamentations to her husband. The latter, annoyed by her unceasing sorrow, advised her to make a pilgrimage to the celebrated *châsse* of the Virgin. She went, was absent a week, and returned with a face all radiant with joy and pleasure. Her lamentations ceased, and, in nine months afterwards, she brought forth a son. But, oh! the instability of human joys! The babe, so long desired and so greatly beloved, survived but a few months. Two years passed over the heads of the disconsolate couple, and no second child appeared to cheer their fireside. A third year passed away with the same result, and the lady once more began to weep. "Cheer up, my love," said her husband, "and go to the holy *châsse*, at Halle; perhaps the Virgin will again listen to your prayers." The lady took courage at the thought, wiped

away her tears, and proceeded on the morrow towards Halle. She was absent only three days, and returned home sad, weeping, and sorrow-stricken. "What is the matter?" said her husband; "is the Virgin unwilling to listen to your prayers?" "The Virgin is willing enough," said the disconsolate wife, "and will do what she can for me; but I shall never have any more children! *The priest! the priest!*— He is gone from Halle, and nobody knows where to find him!"

It is curious to remark the avidity manifested in all ages, and in all countries, to obtain possession of some relic of any persons who have been much spoken of, even for their crimes. When William Longbeard, leader of the populace of London, in the reign of Richard I., was hanged at Smithfield, the utmost eagerness was shown to obtain a hair from his head, or a shred from his garments. Women came from Essex, Kent, Suffolk, Sussex, and all the surrounding counties, to collect the mould at the foot of his gallows. A hair of his beard was believed to preserve from evil spirits, and a piece of his clothes from aches and pains.

In more modern days, a similar avidity was shown to obtain a relic of the luckless Masaniello, the fisherman of Naples. After he had been raised by mob favour to a height of power more despotic than monarch ever wielded, he was shot by the same populace in the streets, as if he had been a mad dog. His headless trunk was dragged through the mire for several hours, and cast at nightfall into the city ditch. On the morrow the tide of popular feeling turned once more in his favour. His corpse was sought, arrayed in royal robes, and buried magnificently by torchlight in the cathedral, ten thousand armed men, and as many mourners, attending at the ceremony. The fisherman's dress which he had worn was rent into shreds by the crowd, to be preserved as relics; the door of his hut was pulled off its hinges by a mob of women, and eagerly cut up into small pieces, to be made into images, caskets, and other mementos. The scanty furniture of his poor abode became of more value than the adornments of a palace; the ground he had walked upon was considered sacred, and, being collected in small phials, was sold at its weight in gold, and worn in the bosom as an amulet.

Almost as extraordinary was the frenzy manifested by the populace of Paris on the execution of the atrocious Marchioness de Brinvilliers. There were grounds for the popular wonder in the case of Masaniello, who was unstained with personal crimes. But the career of Madame de Brinvilliers was of a nature to excite no other feelings than disgust and abhorrence. She was convicted of poisoning several persons, and sentenced to be burned in the Place de Grève, and to have her ashes scattered to the winds. On the day of her execution, the populace, struck by her gracefulness and beauty, inveighed against the severity of her sentence. Their pity soon increased to admiration, and, ere evening, she was considered a saint. Her ashes were industriously collected; even the charred wood, which had aided to consume her, was eagerly purchased by the populace. Her ashes were thought to preserve from witchcraft.

In England many persons have a singular love for the relics of thieves and murderers, or other great criminals. The ropes with which they have been hanged are very often bought by collectors at a guinea per foot. Great sums were paid for the rope which hanged Dr. Dodd, and for those more recently which did justice upon Mr. Fauntleroy for forgery, and on Thurtell for the murder of Mr. Weare. The murder of Maria Marten, by Corder, in the year 1828, excited the greatest interest all over the country. People came from Wales and Scotland, and even from Ireland, to visit the barn where the body of the murdered woman was buried. Every one of them was anxious to carry away some memorial of his visit. Pieces of the barn-door, tiles from the roof, and, above all, the clothes of the poor victim, were eagerly sought after. A lock of her hair was sold for two guineas, and the purchaser thought himself fortunate in getting it so cheaply.

So great was the concourse of people to visit the house in Camberwell Lane, where Greenacre murdered Hannah Brown, in 1837, that it was found necessary to station a strong detachment of police on the spot. The crowd was so eager to obtain a relic of the house of this atrocious criminal, that the police were obliged to employ force to prevent the tables and chairs, and even the doors, from being carried away.

In earlier times, a singular superstition was attached to

the hand of a criminal who had suffered execution. It was thought that by merely rubbing the dead hand on the body, the patient afflicted with the king's evil would be instantly cured. The executioner at Newgate, sixty or seventy years ago, derived no inconsiderable revenue from this foolish practice. The possession of the hand was thought to be of still greater efficacy in the cure of diseases and the prevention of misfortunes. In the time of Charles II. as much as ten guineas was thought a small price for one of these disgusting relics.

When the maniac, Thom, or Courtenay, was shot, in the spring of 1838, the relic-hunters were immediately in motion to obtain a memento of so extraordinary an individual. His long, black beard and hair, which were cut off by the surgeons, fell into the hands of his disciples, by whom they are treasured with the utmost reverence. A lock of his hair commands a great price, not only amongst his followers, but among the more wealthy inhabitants of Canterbury and its neighbourhood. The tree against which he fell when he was shot, has already been stripped of all its bark by the curious, and bids fair to be entirely demolished within a twelvemonth. A letter, with his signature to it, is paid for in gold coins; and his favourite horse promises to become as celebrated as his master. Parties of ladies and gentlemen have come to Boughton from a distance of a hundred and fifty miles, to visit the scene of that fatal affray, and stroke on the back the horse of the "mad Knight of Malta." If a strict watch had not been kept over his grave for months, the body would have been disinterred, and the bones carried away as memorials.

Among the Chinese no relics are more valued than the *boots* which have been worn by an upright magistrate. In Davis's interesting Description of the Empire of China, we are informed, that whenever a judge of unusual integrity resigns his situation, the people all congregate to do him honour. If he leaves the city where he has presided, the crowd accompany him from his residence to the gates, where his boots are drawn off with great ceremony, to be preserved in the hall of justice. Their place is immediately supplied by a new pair, which, in their turn, are drawn off to make

room for others before he has worn them five minutes, it being considered sufficient to consecrate them that he should have merely drawn them on.

Among the most favourite relics of modern times, in Europe, are Shakspeare's mulberry-tree, Napoleon's willow, and the table at Waterloo, on which the Emperor wrote his despatches. Snuff-boxes of Shakspeare's mulberry-tree, are comparatively rare, though there are doubtless more of them in the market than were ever made of the wood planted by the great bard. Many a piece of alien wood passes under this name. The same may be said of Napoleon's table at Waterloo. The original has long since been destroyed, and a round dozen of counterfeits along with it. Many preserve the simple stick of wood; others have them cut into brooches and every variety of ornament; but by far the greater number prefer them as snuff-boxes. In France they are made into *bonbonnières*, and are much esteemed by the many thousands whose cheeks still glow, and whose eyes still sparkle at the name of Napoleon.

Bullets from the field of Waterloo, and buttons from the coats of the soldiers who fell in the fight, are still favourite relics in Europe. But the same ingenuity which found new tables after the old one was destroyed, has cast new bullets for the curious. Many a one who thinks himself the possessor of a bullet which aided in giving peace to the world on that memorable day, is the owner of a dump, first extracted from the ore a dozen years afterwards. Let all lovers of genuine relics look well to their money before they part with it to the ciceroni that swarm in the village of Waterloo.

Few travellers stop at the lonely isle of St. Helena, without cutting a twig from the willow that droops over the grave of Napoleon. Many of them have been since planted in different parts of Europe, and have grown into trees as large as their parent. Relic-hunters, who are unable to procure a twig of the original, are content with one from these. Several of them are growing in the neighbourhood of London, more prized by their cultivators than any other tree in their gardens.

But in relics, as in everything else, there is the use and the abuse. The undoubted relics of great men, or great

events, will always possess attractions for the thinking and refined. There are few who would not join with Cowley in the extravagant wish introduced in his lines "written while sitting in a chair made of the remains of the ship in which Sir Francis Drake sailed round the world:"—

> And I myself, who now love quiet too,
> Almost as much as any chair can do,
> Would yet a journey take
> An old wheel of that chariot to see,
> Which Phaeton so rashly brake.

MODERN PROPHECIES.

An epidemic terror of the end of the world has several times spread over the nations. The most remarkable was that which seized Christendom about the middle of the tenth century. Numbers of fanatics appeared in France, Germany, and Italy at that time, preaching that the thousand years prophesied in the Apocalypse as the term of the world's duration, were about to expire, and the Son of Man would appear in the clouds to judge the godly and the ungodly. The delusion appears to have been discouraged by the church, but it nevertheless spread rapidly among the people.*

The scene of the last judgment was expected to be at Jerusalem. In the year 999, the number of pilgrims proceeding eastward, to await the coming of the Lord in that city, was so great that they were compared to a desolating army. Most of them sold their goods and possessions before they quitted Europe, and lived upon the proceeds in the Holy Land. Buildings of every sort were suffered to fall into ruins. It was thought useless to repair them, when the end of the world was so near. Many noble edifices were deliberately pulled down. Even churches, usually so well maintained, shared the general neglect. Knights, citizens, and serfs, travelled eastwards in company, taking with them their wives and children, singing psalms as they went, and looking with fearful eyes upon the sky, which they expected each minute to open, to let the Son of God descend in his glory.

During the thousandth year the number of pilgrims increased. Most of them were smitten with terror as with a plague. Every phenomenon of nature filled them with alarm. A thunder-storm sent them all upon their knees in mid-march.

* See Gibbon and Voltaire for further notice of this subject.

It was the opinion that thunder was the voice of God, announcing the day of judgment. Numbers expected the earth to open, and give up its dead at the sound. Every meteor in the sky seen at Jerusalem brought the whole Christian population into the streets to weep and pray. The pilgrims on the road were in the same alarm:—

> Lorsque, pendant la nuit, un globe de lumière
> S'échappa quelquefois de la voûte des cieux,
> Et traça dans sa chûte un long sillon de feux,
> La troupe suspendit sa marche solitaire.*

Fanatic preachers kept up the flame of terror. Every shooting star furnished occasion for a sermon, in which the sublimity of the approaching judgment was the principal topic.

The appearance of comets has been often thought to foretell the speedy dissolution of this world. Part of this belief still exists; but the comet is no longer looked upon as the sign, but the agent, of destruction. So lately as in the year 1832 the greatest alarm spread over the continent of Europe, especially in Germany, lest the comet, whose appearance was then foretold by astronomers, should destroy the earth. The danger of our globe was gravely discussed. Many persons refrained from undertaking or concluding any business during that year, in consequence solely of their apprehension that this terrible comet would dash us and our world to atoms.

During seasons of great pestilence men have often believed the prophecies of crazed fanatics, that the end of the world was come. Credulity is always greatest in times of calamity. Prophecies of all sorts are rife on such occasions, and are readily believed, whether for good or evil. During the great plague, which ravaged all Europe, between the years 1345 and 1350, it was generally considered that the end of the world was at hand. Pretended prophets were to be found in all the principal cities of Germany, France, and Italy, predicting that within ten years the trump of the Archangel would sound, and the Saviour appear in the clouds to call the earth to judgment.

No little consternation was created in London in 1736 by the prophecy of the famous Whiston, that the world would be destroyed in that year, on the 13th of October. Crowds of

* Charlemagne. Poëme Epique, par Lucien Buonaparte.

people went out on the appointed day to Islington, Hampstead, and the fields intervening, to see the destruction of London, which was to be the "beginning of the end." A satirical account of this folly is given in Swift's Miscellanies, vol. iii., entitled, "A True and Faithful Narrative of what passed in London on a Rumour of the Day of Judgment." An authentic narrative of this delusion would be interesting; but this solemn witticism of Pope and Gay is not to be depended upon.

In the year 1761 the citizens of London were again frightened out of their wits by two shocks of an earthquake, and the prophecy of a third, which was to destroy them altogether. The first shock was felt on the 8th of February, and threw down several chimneys in the neighbourhood of Limehouse and Poplar; the second happened on the 8th of March, and was chiefly felt in the north of London, and towards Hampstead and Highgate. It soon became the subject of general remark, that there was exactly an interval of a month between the shocks; and a crack-brained fellow, named Bell, a soldier in the Life Guards, was so impressed with the idea that there would be a third in another month, that he lost his senses altogether, and ran about the streets predicting the destruction of London on the 5th of April. Most people thought that the *first* would have been a more appropriate day; but there were not wanting thousands who confidently believed the prediction, and took measures to transport themselves and families from the scene of the impending calamity. As the awful day approached, the excitement became intense, and great numbers of credulous people resorted to all the villages within a circuit of twenty miles, awaiting the doom of London. Islington, Highgate, Hampstead, Harrow, and Blackheath, were crowded with panic-stricken fugitives, who paid exorbitant prices for accommodation to the housekeepers of these secure retreats. Such as could not afford to pay for lodgings at any of those places, remained in London until two or three days before the time, and then encamped in the surrounding fields, awaiting the tremendous shock which was to lay their high city all level with the dust. As happened during a similar panic in the time of Henry VIII., the fear became contagious, and hundreds who had laughed at the prediction a week before, packed up their goods, when they

saw others doing so, and hastened away. The river was thought to be a place of great security, and all the merchant vessels in the port were filled with people, who passed the night between the 4th and 5th on board, expecting every instant to see St. Paul's totter, and the towers of Westminster Abbey rock in the wind and fall amid a cloud of dust. The greater part of the fugitives returned on the following day, convinced that the prophet was a false one; but many judged it more prudent to allow a week to elapse before they trusted their dear limbs in London. Bell lost all credit in a short time, and was looked upon even by the most credulous as a mere madman. He tried some other prophecies, but nobody was deceived by them; and, in a few months afterwards, he was confined in a lunatic asylum.

A panic terror of the end of the world seized the good people of Leeds and its neighbourhood in the year 1806. It arose from the following circumstances. A hen, in a village close by, laid eggs, on which were inscribed, in legible characters, the words "*Christ is coming.*" Great numbers visited the spot, and examined these wondrous eggs, convinced that the day of judgment was near at hand. Like sailors in a storm, expecting every instant to go to the bottom, the believers suddenly became religious, prayed violently, and flattered themselves that they repented them of their evil courses. But a plain tale soon put them down, and quenched their religion entirely. Some gentlemen, hearing of the matter, went one fine morning, and caught the poor hen in the act of laying one of her miraculous eggs. They soon ascertained beyond doubt that the egg had been inscribed with some corrosive ink, and cruelly forced up again into the bird's body. At this explanation, those who had prayed, now laughed, and the world wagged as merrily as of yore.

At the time of the plague in Milan, in 1630, of which so affecting a description has been left us by Ripamonte, in his interesting work *De Peste Mediolani*, the people, in their distress, listened with avidity to the predictions of astrologers and other impostors. It is singular enough that the plague was foretold a year before it broke out. A large comet appearing in 1628, the opinions of astrologers were divided with regard to it. Some insisted that it was a forerunner of a bloody war; others maintained that it predicted a great

famine; but the greater number, founding their judgment upon its pale colour, thought it portended a pestilence. The fulfilment of their prediction brought them into great repute while the plague was raging.

Other prophecies were current, which were asserted to have been delivered hundreds of years previously. They had a most pernicious effect upon the mind of the vulgar, as they induced a belief in fatalism. By taking away the hope of recovery—that greatest balm in every malady—they increased threefold the ravages of the disease. One singular prediction almost drove the unhappy people mad. An ancient couplet, preserved for ages by tradition, foretold, that, in the year 1630, the devil would poison all Milan. Early one morning in April, and before the pestilence had reached its height, the passengers were surprised to see that all the doors in the principal streets of the city were marked with a curious daub, or spot, as if a sponge, filled with the purulent matter of the plague-sores, had been pressed against them. The whole population were speedily in movement to remark the strange appearance, and the greatest alarm spread rapidly. Every means was taken to discover the perpetrators, but in vain. At last the ancient prophecy was remembered, and prayers were offered up in all the churches that the machinations of the Evil One might be defeated. Many persons were of opinion that the emissaries of foreign powers were employed to spread infectious poison over the city; but by far the greater number were convinced that the powers of hell had conspired against them, and that the infection was spread by supernatural agencies. In the mean time the plague increased fearfully. Distrust and alarm took possession of every mind. Everything was believed to have been poisoned by the devil; the waters of the wells, the standing corn in the fields, and the fruit upon the trees. It was believed that all objects of touch were poisoned; the walls of the houses, the pavement of the streets, and the very handles of the doors. The populace were raised to a pitch of ungovernable fury. A strict watch was kept for the devil's emissaries, and any man who wanted to be rid of an enemy, had only to say that he had seen him besmearing a door with ointment; his fate was certain death at the hands of the mob. An old man, upwards of eighty years of age, a daily frequenter of the

church of St. Antonio, was seen, on rising from his knees, to wipe with the skirt of his cloak the stool on which he was about to sit down. A cry was raised immediately that he was besmearing the seat with poison. A mob of women, by whom the church was crowded, seized hold of the feeble old man, and dragged him out by the hair of his head, with horrid oaths and imprecations. He was trailed in this manner through the mire to the house of the municipal judge, that he might be put to the rack, and forced to discover his accomplices; but he expired on the way. Many other victims were sacrificed to the popular fury. One Mora, who appears to have been half a chemist and half a barber, was accused of being in league with the devil to poison Milan. His house was surrounded, and a number of chemical preparations were found. The poor man asserted that they were intended as preservatives against infection; but some physicians, to whom they were submitted, declared they were poison. Mora was put to the rack, where he for a long time asserted his innocence. He confessed at last, when his courage was worn down by torture, that he was in league with the devil and foreign powers to poison the whole city: that he had anointed the doors, and infected the fountains of water. He named several persons as his accomplices, who were apprehended and put to a similar torture. They were all found guilty, and executed. Mora's house was rased to the ground, and a column erected on the spot, with an inscription to commemorate his guilt.

While the public mind was filled with these marvellous occurrences, the plague continued to increase. The crowds that were brought together to witness the executions, spread the infection among one another. But the fury of their passions, and the extent of their credulity, kept pace with the violence of the plague; every wonderful and preposterous story was believed. One, in particular, occupied them to the exclusion, for a long time, of every other. The Devil himself had been seen. He had taken a house in Milan, in which he prepared his poisonous unguents, and furnished them to his emissaries for distribution. One man had brooded over such tales till he became firmly convinced that the wild flights of his own fancy were realities. He stationed himself in the market-place of Milan, and related the following story to the

crowds that gathered round him. He was standing, he said, at the door of the cathedral, late in the evening, and when there was nobody nigh, he saw a dark-coloured chariot, drawn by six milk-white horses, stop close beside him. The chariot was followed by a numerous train of domestics in dark liveries, mounted on dark-coloured steeds. In the chariot there sat a tall stranger of a majestic aspect; his long black hair floated in the wind—fire flashed from his large black eyes, and a curl of ineffable scorn dwelt upon his lips. The look of the stranger was so sublime that he was awed, and trembled with fear when he gazed upon him. His complexion was much darker than that of any man he had ever seen, and the atmosphere around him was hot and suffocating. He perceived immediately that he was a being of another world. The stranger, seeing his trepidation, asked him blandly, yet majestically, to mount beside him. He had no power to refuse, and before he was well aware that he had moved, he found himself in the chariot. Onwards they went, with the rapidity of the wind, the stranger speaking no word, until they stopped before a door in the high-street of Milan. There was a crowd of people in the street, but, to his great surprise, no one seemed to notice the extraordinary equipage and its numerous train. From this he concluded that they were invisible. The house at which they stopped appeared to be a shop, but the interior was like a vast half-ruined palace. He went with his mysterious guide through several large and dimly-lighted rooms. In one of them, surrounded by huge pillars of marble, a senate of ghosts was assembled, debating on the progress of the plague. Other parts of the building were enveloped in the thickest darkness, illumined at intervals by flashes of lightning, which allowed him to distinguish a number of gibing and chattering skeletons, running about and pursuing each other, or playing at leap-frog over one another's backs. At the rear of the mansion was a wild, uncultivated plot of ground, in the midst of which arose a black rock. Down its sides rushed with fearful noise a torrent of poisonous water, which, insinuating itself through the soil, penetrated to all the springs of the city, and rendered them unfit for use. After he had been shown all this, the stranger led him into another large chamber, filled with gold and precious stones, all of which he offered him if he would kneel down and wor-

ship him, and consent to smear the doors and houses of Milan with a pestiferous salve which he held out to him. He now knew him to be the Devil, and in that moment of temptation, prayed to God to give him strength to resist. His prayer was heard—he refused the bribe. The stranger scowled horribly upon him—a loud clap of thunder burst over his head—the vivid lightning flashed in his eyes, and the next moment he found himself standing alone at the porch of the cathedral. He repeated this strange tale day after day, without any variation, and all the populace were firm believers in its truth. Repeated search was made to discover the mysterious house, but all in vain. The man pointed out several as resembling it, which were searched by the police; but the Demon of the Pestilence was not to be found, nor the hall of ghosts, nor the poisonous fountain. But the minds of the people were so impressed with the idea that scores of witnesses, half crazed by disease, came forward to swear that they also had seen the diabolical stranger, and had heard his chariot, drawn by the milk-white steeds, rumbling over the streets at midnight with a sound louder than thunder.

The number of persons who confessed that they were employed by the Devil to distribute poison is almost incredible. An epidemic frenzy was abroad, which seemed to be as contagious as the plague. Imagination was as disordered as the body, and day after day persons came voluntarily forward to accuse themselves. They generally had the marks of disease upon them, and some died in the act of confession.

During the great plague of London, in 1665, the people listened with similar avidity to the predictions of quacks and fanatics. Defoe says, that at that time the people were more addicted to prophecies and astronomical conjurations, dreams, and old wives' tales than ever they were before or since. Almanacs, and their predictions, frightened them terribly. Even the year before the plague broke out, they were greatly alarmed by the comet which then appeared, and anticipated that famine, pestilence, or fire would follow. Enthusiasts, while yet the disease had made but little progress, ran about the streets, predicting that in a few days London would be destroyed.

A still more singular instance of the faith in predictions occurred in London in the year 1524. The city swarmed at

that time with fortune-tellers and astrologers, who were consulted daily by people of every class in society on the secrets of futurity. As early as the month of June, 1523, several of them concurred in predicting that, on the 1st day of February, 1524, the waters of the Thames would swell to such a height as to overflow the whole city of London, and wash away ten thousand houses. The prophecy met implicit belief. It was reiterated with the utmost confidence month after month, until so much alarm was excited that many families packed up their goods, and removed into Kent and Essex. As the time drew nigh, the number of these emigrants increased. In January, droves of workmen might be seen, followed by their wives and children, trudging on foot to the villages within fifteen or twenty miles, to await the catastrophe. People of a higher class were also to be seen, in waggons and other vehicles, bound on a similar errand. By the middle of January, at least twenty thousand persons had quitted the doomed city, leaving nothing but the bare walls of their homes to be swept away by the impending floods. Many of the richer sort took up their abode on the heights of Highgate, Hampstead, and Blackheath; and some erected tents as far away as Waltham Abbey, on the north, and Croydon, on the south of the Thames. Bolton, the prior of St. Bartholomew's, was so alarmed that he erected, at very great expense, a sort of fortress at Harrow-on-the-Hill, which he stocked with provisions for two months. On the 24th of January, a week before the awful day which was to see the destruction of London, he removed thither, with the brethren and officers of the priory and all his household. A number of boats were conveyed in waggons to his fortress, furnished abundantly with expert rowers, in case the flood, reaching so high as Harrow, should force them to go further for a resting-place. Many wealthy citizens prayed to share his retreat, but the Prior, with a prudent forethought, admitted only his personal friends, and those who brought stores of eatables for the blockade.

At last the morn, big with the fate of London, appeared in the east. The wondering crowds were astir at an early hour to watch the rising of the waters. The inundation, it was predicted, would be gradual, not sudden; so that they expected to have plenty of time to escape, as soon as they saw the bosom of old Thames heave beyond the usual mark. But

the majority were too much alarmed to trust to this, and thought themselves safer ten or twenty miles off. The Thames, unmindful of the foolish crowds upon its banks, flowed on quietly as of yore. The tide ebbed at its usual hour, flowed to its usual height, and then ebbed again, just as if twenty astrologers had not pledged their words to the contrary. Blank were their faces as evening approached, and as blank grew the faces of the citizens to think that they had made such fools of themselves. At last night set in, and the obstinate river would not lift its waters to sweep away even one house out of the ten thousand. Still, however, the people were afraid to go to sleep. Many hundreds remained up till dawn of the next day, lest the deluge should come upon them like a thief in the night.

On the morrow, it was seriously discussed whether it would not be advisable to duck the false prophets in the river. Luckily for them, they thought of an expedient which allayed the popular fury. They asserted that, by an error (a very slight one) of a little figure, they had fixed the date of this awful inundation a whole century too early. The stars were right after all, and they, erring mortals, were wrong. The present generation of cockneys was safe, and London would be washed away, not in 1524, but in 1624. At this announcement, Bolton, the prior, dismantled his fortress, and the weary emigrants came back.

An eye-witness of the great fire of London, in an account preserved among the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum, and recently published in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, relates another instance of the credulity of the Londoners. The writer, who accompanied the Duke of York day by day through the district included between the Fleet Bridge and the Thames, states that, in their efforts to check the progress of the flames, they were much impeded by the superstition of the people. Mother Shipton, in one of her prophecies, had said that London would be reduced to ashes, and they refused to make any efforts to prevent it.*

* This prophecy seems to have been that set forth at length in the popular Life of Mother Shipton:—

"When fate to England shall restore
A king to reign as heretofore,
Great death in London shall be though,
And many houses be laid low."

A son of the noted Sir Kenelm Digby, who was also a pretender to the gifts of prophecy, persuaded them that no power on earth could prevent the fulfilment of the prediction; for it was written in the great book of fate that London was to be destroyed. Hundreds of persons, who might have rendered valuable assistance, and saved whole parishes from devastation, folded their arms and looked on. As many more gave themselves up, with the less compunction, to plunder a city which they could not save.

The prophecies of Mother Shipton are still believed in many of the rural districts of England. In cottages and servants' halls her reputation is great; and she rules, the most popular of British prophets, among all the uneducated, or half-educated, portions of the community. She is generally supposed to have been born at Knaresborough, in the reign of Henry VII., and to have sold her soul to the Devil for the power of foretelling future events. Though during her lifetime she was looked upon as a witch, she yet escaped the witch's fate, and died peaceably in her bed at an extreme old age, near Clifton in Yorkshire. A stone is said to have been erected to her memory in the churchyard of that place, with the following epitaph:—

"Here lies she who never lied;
Whose skill often has been tried:
Her prophecies shall still survive,
And ever keep her name alive."

"Never a day passed," say her traditionary biography, "wherein she did not relate something remarkable, and that required the most serious consideration. People flocked to her from far and near, her fame was so great. They went to her of all sorts, both old and young, rich and poor, especially young maidens, to be resolved of their doubts relating to things to come; and all returned wonderfully satisfied in the explanations she gave to their questions." Among the rest, went the Abbot of Beverley, to whom she foretold the suppression of the monasteries by Henry VIII.; his marriage with Anne Boleyn; the fires for heretics in Smithfield, and the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. She also foretold the accession of James I., adding that, with him,

"From the cold North,
Every evil should come forth."

On a subsequent visit she uttered another prophecy, which, in the opinion of her believers, still remains unfulfilled, but may be expected to be realized during the present century:—

"The time shall come when seas of blood
Shall mingle with a greater flood.
Great noise there shall be heard—great shouts and cries,
And seas shall thunder louder than the skies;
Then shall three lions fight with three, and bring
Joy to a people, honour to a king.
That fiery year as soon as o'er,
Peace shall then be as before;
Plenty shall everywhere be found,
And men with swords shall plough the ground."

But the most famous of all her prophecies is one relating to London. Thousand of persons still shudder to think of the woes that are to burst over this unhappy realm, when London and Highgate are joined by one continuous line of houses. This junction, which, if the rage for building lasts longer, in the same proportion as heretofore, bids fair to be soon accomplished, was predicted by her shortly before her death. Revolutions—fall of mighty monarchs, and the shedding of much blood are to signalize that event. The very angels, afflicted by our woes, are to turn aside their heads, and weep for hapless Britain.

But great as is the fame of Mother Shipton, she ranks but second in the list of British prophets. Merlin, the mighty Merlin, stands alone in his high pre-eminence—the first and greatest. As old Drayton sings, in his Poly-olbion:—

"Of Merlin and his skill what region doth not hear?
The world shall still be full of Merlin every year.
A thousand lingering years his prophecies have run,
And scarcely shall have end till time itself be done."

Spenser, in his divine poem, has given us a powerful description of this renowned seer—

———"Who had in magic more insight
Than ever him before, or after, living wight.

"For he by words could call out of the sky
Both sun and moon, and make them him obey;

The land to sea, and sea to mainland dry,
And darksome night he eke could turn to day—
Huge hosts of men he could, alone, dismay,
And hosts of men and meanest things could frame,
Whenso him list his enemies to fray,
That to this day, for terror of his name,
The fiends do quake, when any him to them does name.

"And soothe men say that he was not the sonne,
Of mortal sire or other living wighte,
But wondrously begotten and begonne
By false illusion of a guileful sprite,
On a faire ladye nun."

In these verses the poet has preserved the popular belief with regard to Merlin, who is generally supposed to have been a contemporary of Vortigern. Opinion is divided as to whether he were a real personage, or a mere impersonation, formed by the poetic fancy of a credulous people. It seems most probable that such a man did exist, and that, possessing knowledge as much above the comprehension of his age, as that possessed by Friar Bacon was beyond the reach of his, he was endowed by the wondering crowd with the supernatural attributes that Spenser has enumerated.

Geoffrey of Monmouth translated Merlin's poetical odes, or prophecies, into Latin prose, and he was much reverenced, not only by Goeffrey, but by most of the old annalists. In a "*Life of Merlin, with his Prophecies and Predictions interpreted and made good by our English Annals*," by Thomas Heywood, published in the reign of Charles I., we find several of these pretended prophecies. They seem however, to have been written by Heywood himself. They are too plain and positive to allow any one to doubt for a moment of their having been composed *ex post facto*. Speaking of Richard I., he says:—

"The Lion's heart will 'gainst the Saracen rise,
And purchase from him many a glorious prize:
The rose and lily shall at first unite,
But, parting of the prey prove opposite.

* * * * * *

But while abroad these great acts shall be done;
All things at home shall to disorder run.
Cooped up and caged then shall the Lion be,
But, after sufferance, ransomed and set free."

The sapient Thomas Heywood gravely goes on to inform us, that all these things actually came to pass. Upon Richard III. he is equally luminous. He says:—

"A hunch-backed monster, who with teeth is born,
The mockery of art and nature's scorn:
Who from the womb preposterously is hurled,
And, with feet forward, thrust into the world,
Shall, from the lower earth on which he stood,
Wade, every step he mounts, knee-deep in blood.
He shall to th' height of all his hopes aspire,
And, clothed in state, his ugly shape admire;
But, when he thinks himself most safe to stand,
From foreign parts a native whelp shall land."

Another of these prophecies after the event tells us that Henry VIII. should take the power from Rome, "and bring it home unto his British bower;" that he should "root out from the land all the razored skulls;" and that he should neither spare "man in his rage nor woman in his lust;" and that, in the time of his next successor but one, "there should come in the fagot and the stake." Master Heywood closes Merlin's prophecies at his own day, and does not give even a glimpse of what was to befall England after his decease. Many other prophecies, besides those quoted by him, were, he says, dispersed abroad, in his day, under the name of Merlin; but he gives his readers a taste of one only, and that is the following:

"When hempe is ripe and ready to pull,
Then, Englishman, beware thy skull."

This prophecy, which, one would think, ought to have put him in mind of the gallows, the not unusual fate of false prophets, and perchance his own, he explains thus:—"In this word HEMPE be five letters. Now, by reckoning the five successive princes from Henry VIII., this prophecy is easily explained: H signifieth King Henry before named; E, Edward, his son, the sixth of that name; M, Mary, who succeeded him; P, Philip of Spain, who by marrying Queen Mary, participated with her in the English diadem; and, lastly, E signifieth Queen Elizabeth, after whose death there was a great feare that some troubles might have arisen about the crown." As this did not happen, Heywood, who was a sly

rogue in a small way, gets out of the scrape by saying, "Yet proved this augury true, though not according to the former expectation; for, after the peaceful inauguration of King James, there was great mortality, not in London only, but through the whole kingdom, and from which the nation was not quite clean in seven years after."

This is not unlike the subterfuge of Peter of Pontefract, who had prophesied the death and deposition of King John, and who was hanged by that monarch for his pains. A very graphic and amusing account of this pretended prophet is given by Grafton, in his Chronicles of England. There is so much homely vigour about the style of the old annalist, that it would be a pity to give the story in other words than his own.* "In the meanwhile," says he, "the priestes within England had provided them a false and counterfeated prophet, called Peter Wakefielde, a Yorkshire man, who was an hermite, an idle gadder about, and a pratlyng marchant. Now to bring this Peter in credite, and the kyng out of all credite with his people, diverse vaine persons bruted dayly among the commons of the realme, that Christe had twice appered unto him in the shape of a childe, between the prieste's handes, once at Yorke, another tyme at Pomfret; and that he had breathed upon him thrice, saying, '*Peace, peace, peace,*' and teachyng many things, which he anon declared to the bishops, and bid the people amend their naughtie living. Being rapt also in spirite, they sayde he beheld the joyes of heaven and sorowes of hell, for scant were there three in the realme, sayde he, that lived Christainly.

"This counterfeated soothsayer prophecied of King John, that he should reigne no longer than the Ascension-day next followyng, which was in the yere of our Lord 1211, and was the thirteenth yere from his coronation; and this, he said, he had by revelation. Then it was of him demanded, whether he should be slaine or be deposed, or should voluntarily give over the crowne? He aunswered, that he could not tell; but of this he was sure (he sayd), that neither he nor any of his stock or lineage should reigne after that day.

"The king hering of this, laughed much at it, and made

* Chronicles of England, by Richard Grafton; London, 1568, p. 106.

but a scoff thereat. 'Tush!' said he, 'it is but an ideot knave, and such an one as lacketh his right wittes.' But when this foolish prophet had so escaped the daunger of the Kinge's displeasure, and that he made no more of it, he gate him abroad, and prated thereof at large, as he was a very idle vagabond, and used to trattle and talke more than ynough, so that they which loved the King caused him anon after to be apprehended as a malefactor, and to be throwen in prison, the King not yet knowing thereof.

"Anone after the fame of this phantasticall prophet went all the realme over, and his name was knowen everywhere, as foolishnesse is much regarded of the people, where wisdome is not in place; specially because he was then imprisoned for the matter, the rumour was the larger, their wonderynges were the wantoner, their practises the foolisher, their busye talkes and other idle doinges the greater. Continually from thence, as the rude manner of people is, olde gossyps tales went abroade, new tales were invented, fables were added to fables, and lyes grew upon lyes. So that every day newe slanders were laide upon the King, and not one of them true. Rumors arose, blasphemyes were sprede, the enemyes rejoyced, and treasons by the priestes were mainteyned; and what lykewise was surmised, or other subtiltye practised, all was then fathered upon this foolish prophet, as 'thus saith Peter Wakefield;' 'thus hath he prophecied;' 'and thus it shall come to pass;' yea, many times, when he thought nothing lesse. And when the Ascension-day was come, which was prophecyed of before, King John commanded his royal tent to be spread in the open fielde, passing that day with his noble counseyle and men of honour, in the greatest solemnitie that ever he did before; solacing himself with musickale instrumentes and songs, most in sight among his trustie friendes. When that day was paste in all prosperitie and myrth, his enemyes being confused, turned all into an allegorical understanding to make the prophecie good, and sayde, 'he is no longer King, for the Pope reigneth, and not he.' [King John was labouring under a sentence of excommunication at the time.]

"Then was the King by his council perswaded that this false prophet had troubled the realme, perverted the heartes of the people, and raysed the commons against him; for his

wordes went over the sea, by the help of his prelates, and came to the French King's eare, and gave to him a great encouragement to invade the lande. He had not else done it so sodeinely. But he was most fowly deceived, as all they are and shall be that put their trust in such dark drowsye dreames of hipocrites. The King therefore commanded that he should be hanged up, and his sonne also with him, lest any more false prophets should arise of that race."

Heywood, who was a great stickler for the truth of all sorts of prophecies, gives a much more favourable account of this Peter of Pomfret, or Pontefract, whose fate he would, in all probability, have shared, if he had had the misfortune to have flourished in the same age. He says, that Peter, who was not only a prophet, but a bard, predicted divers of King John's disasters, which fell out accordingly. On being taxed for a lying prophet in having predicted that the King would be deposed before he entered into the fifteenth year of his reign, he answered him boldly, that all he had said was justifiable and true; for that, having given up his crown to the Pope, and paying him an annual tribute, the Pope reigned, and not he. Heywood thought this explanation to be perfectly satisfactory, and the prophet's faith for ever established.

But to return to Merlin. Of him even to this day it may be said, in the words which Burns has applied to another notorious personage,

> "Great was his power and great his fame;
> Far kenned and noted is his name!"

His reputation is by no means confined to the land of his birth, but extends through most of the nations of Europe. A very curious volume of his Life, Prophecies, and Miracles, written, it is supposed, by Robert de Bosron, was printed at Paris in 1498, which states, that the Devil himself was his father, and that he spoke the instant he was born, and assured his mother, a very virtuous young woman, that she should not die in childbed with him, as her ill-natured neighbours had predicted. The judge of the district, hearing of so marvellous an occurrence, summoned both mother and child to appear before him; and they went accordingly the same day. To put the wisdom of the young prophet most effectually to the test, the judge asked him if he knew his own

father? To which the infant Merlin replied, in a clear, sonorous voice, "Yes, my father is the Devil; and I have his power, and know all things, past, present, and to come." His worship clapped his hands in astonishment, and took the prudent resolution of not molesting so awful a child, or its mother, either.

Early tradition attributes the building of Stonehenge to the power of Merlin. It was believed that those mighty stones were whirled through the air, at his command, from Ireland to Salisbury Plain, and that he arranged them in the form in which they now stand, to commemorate for ever the unhappy fate of three hundred British chiefs, who were massacred on that spot by the Saxons.

At Abergwylly, near Caermarthen, is still shown the cave of the prophet and the scene of his incantations. How beautiful is the description of it given by Spenser in his "Faerie Queene." The lines need no apology for their repetition here, and any sketch of the great prophet of Britain would be incomplete without them:—

"There the wise Merlin, whilom wont (they say),
To make his wonne low underneath the ground,
In a deep delve far from the view of day,
That of no living wight he mote be found,
Whenso he counselled with his sprites encompassed round.

"And if thou ever happen that same way
To travel, go to see that dreadful place;
It is a hideous, hollow cave, they say,
Under a rock that lies a little space
From the swift Barry, tumbling down apace
Amongst the woody hills of Dynevoure;
But dare thou not, I charge, in any case,
To enter into that same baleful bower,
For fear the cruel fiendes should thee unwares devour!

"But, standing high aloft, low lay thine eare,
And there such ghastly noise of iron chaines
And brazen caudrons thou shalt rombling heare,
Which thousand sprites, with long-enduring paines,
Doe tosse, that it will stun thy feeble braines;
And often times great groans and grievous stownds,
When too huge toile and labour them constraines;
And often times loud strokes and ringing sounds
From under that deep rock most horribly rebounds.

"The cause, they say, is this. A little while
Before that Merlin died, he did intend

A brazen wall, in compass to compile
About Cayr Merdin, and did it commend
Unto these sprites to bring to perfect end;
During which work the Lady of the Lake,
Whom long he loved, for him in haste did send,
Who thereby forced his workmen to forsake,
Them bound till his return their labour not to slake.

"In the mean time, through that false ladie's traine,
He was surprised, and buried under biere,
Ne ever to his work returned again;
Natheless these fiends may not their work forbeare,
So greatly his commandement they fear,
But there doe toile and travaile day and night,
Until that brazen wall they up doe reare." *

Amongst other English prophets, a belief in whose power has not been entirely effaced by the light of advancing knowledge, is Robert Nixon, the Cheshire idiot, a contemporary of Mother Shipton. The popular accounts of this man say, that he was born of poor parents, not far from Vale Royal, on the edge of the forest of Delamere. He was brought up to the plough, but was so ignorant and stupid, that nothing could be made of him. Everybody thought him irretrievably insane, and paid no attention to the strange, unconnected discourses which he held. Many of his prophecies are believed to have been lost in this manner. But they were not always destined to be wasted upon dull and inattentive ears. An incident occurred which brought him into notice, and established his fame as a prophet of the first calibre. He was ploughing in a field when he suddenly stopped from his labour, and, with a wild look and strange gestures, exclaimed, "*Now, Dick! now, Harry! O, ill done, Dick! O, well done, Harry! Harry has gained the day!*" His fellow-labourers in the field did not know what to make of this rhapsody; but the next day cleared up the mystery. News was brought by a messenger, in hot haste, that at the very instant when Nixon had thus ejaculated, Richard III. had been slain at the battle of Bosworth, and Henry VII. proclaimed King of England.

It was not long before the fame of the new prophet reached the ears of the King, who expressed a wish to see and converse with him. A messenger was accordingly despatched to

* Faerie Queene, b. 3. c. 3. s. 6—18.

bring him to court; but long before he reached Cheshire, Nixon knew and dreaded the honours that awaited him. Indeed it was said, that at the very instant the King expressed the wish, Nixon was, by supernatural means, made acquainted with it, and that he ran about the town of Over in great distress of mind, calling out, like a madman, that Henry had sent for him, and that he must go to court, and be *clammed;* that is, starved to death. These expressions excited no little wonder; but, on the third day, the messenger arrived, and carried him to court, leaving on the minds of the good people of Cheshire an impression that their prophet was one of the greatest ever born. On his arrival King Henry appeared to be troubled exceedingly at the loss of a valuable diamond, and asked Nixon if he could inform him where it was to be found. Henry had hidden the diamond himself, with a view to test the prophet's skill. Great, therefore, was his surprise when Nixon answered him in the words of the old proverb, "Those who hide can find." From that time forth the King implicitly believed that he had the gift of prophecy, and ordered all his words to be taken down.

During all the time of his residence at court he was in constant fear of being starved to death, and repeatedly told the King that such would be his fate, if he were not allowed to depart, and return into his own country. Henry would not suffer it, but gave strict orders to all his officers and cooks to give him as much to eat as he wanted. He lived so well, that for some time he seemed to be thriving like a nobleman's steward, and growing as fat as an alderman. One day the king went out hunting, when Nixon ran to the palace gate, and entreated on his knees that he might not be left behind to be starved. The King laughed, and, calling an officer, told him to take especial care of the prophet during his absence, and rode away to the forest. After his departure, the servants of the palace began to jeer at and insult Nixon, whom they imagined to be much better treated than he deserved. Nixon complained to the officer, who, to prevent him from being further molested, locked him up in the King's own closet, and brought him regularly his four meals a day. But it so happened that a messenger arrived from the King to this officer, requiring his immediate presence at Winchester, on a matter of life and death. So great was his haste to

obey the King's command, that he mounted on the horse behind the messenger, and rode off, without bestowing a thought upon poor Nixon. He did not return till three days afterwards, when, remembering the prophet for the first time, he went to the King's closet, and found him lying upon the floor, starved to death, as he had predicted.

Among the prophecies of his which are believed to have been fulfilled, are the following, which relate to the times of the Pretender:—

"A great man shall come into England,
But the son of a King
Shall take from him the victory."

"Crows shall drink the blood of many nobles,
And the North shall rise against the South."

"The cock of the North shall be made to flee,
And his feather be plucked for his pride,
That he shall almost curse the day that he was born."

All these, say his admirers, are as clear as the sun at noonday. The first denotes the defeat of Prince Charles Edward, at the battle of Culloden, by the Duke of Cumberland; the second, the execution of Lords Derwentwater, Balmerino, and Lovat; and the third, the retreat of the Pretender from the shores of Britain. Among the prophecies that still remain to be accomplished, are the following:—

"Between seven, eight, and nine,
In England wonders shall be seen;
Between nine and thirteen
All sorrow shall be done!"

"Through our own money and our men
Shall a dreadful war begin.
Between the sickle and the suck
All England shall have a pluck."

"Foreign nations shall invade England with snow on their helmets, and shall bring plague, famine, and murder in the skirts of their garments."

"The town of Nantwich shall be swept away by a flood."

Of the first two of these no explanation has yet been attempted; but some event or other will doubtless be twisted into such a shape as will fit them. The third, relative to the

invasion of England by a nation with snow on their helmets, is supposed by the old women to foretell most clearly the coming war with Russia. As to the last, there are not a few in the town mentioned who devoutly believe that such will be its fate. Happily for their peace of mind, the prophet said nothing of the year that was to witness the awful calamity; so that they think it as likely to be two centuries hence as now.

The popular biographers of Nixon conclude their account of him by saying, that "his prophecies are by some persons thought fables; yet by what has come to pass, it is now thought, and very plainly appears, that most of them have proved, or will prove, true; for which we, on all occasions, ought not only to exert our utmost might to repel by force our enemies, but to refrain from our abandoned and wicked course of life, and to make our continual prayer to God for protection and safety." To this, though a *non sequitur*, every one will cry Amen!

Besides the prophets, there have been the almanac-makers, Lilly, Poor Robin, Partridge, and Francis Moore, physician, in England, and Matthew Laensbergh, in France and Belgium. But great as were their pretensions, they were modesty itself in comparison with Merlin, Shipton, and Nixon, who fixed their minds upon higher things than the weather, and who were not so restrained in their flights of fancy as to prophesy for only one year at a time. After such prophets as they, the almanac-makers hardly deserve to be mentioned: no, not even the renowned Partridge, whose wonderful prognostications set all England agog in 1708, and whose death, at a time when he was still alive and kicking, was so pleasantly and satisfactorily proved by Isaac Bickerstaff. The anti-climax would be too palpable, and they and their doings must be left uncommemorated.

POPULAR ADMIRATION FOR GREAT THIEVES.

Jack. Where shall we find such another set of practical philosophers who, to a man, are above the fear of death?
Wat. Sound men and true!
Robin. Of tried courage and indefatigable industry!
Ned. Who is there here that would not die for his friend?
Harry. Who is there here that would betray him for his interest?
Mat. Show me a gang of courtiers that could say as much!

Dialogue of thieves in the Beggars' Opera.

WHETHER it be that the multitude, feeling the pangs of poverty, sympathize with the daring and ingenious depredators who take away the rich man's superfluity, or whether it be the interest that mankind in general feel for the records of perilous adventures, it is certain that the populace of all countries look with admiration upon great and successful thieves. Perhaps both these causes combine to invest their career with charms in the popular eye. Almost every country in Europe has its traditional thief, whose exploits are recorded with all the graces of poetry, and whose trespasses—

> ———"Are cited up in rhymes,
> And sung by children in succeeding times."*

Those travellers who have made national manners and characteristics their peculiar study, have often observed and remarked upon this feeling. The learned Abbé le Blanc, who resided for some time in England at the commencement of the eighteenth century, says, in his amusing letters on the English and French nations, that he continually met with Englishmen who were not less vain in boasting of the success of their highwaymen than of the bravery of their troops. Tales of their address, their cunning, or their generosity, were in the mouths of everybody, and a noted thief was a

* Shakspeare's Rape of Lucretia.

kind of hero in high repute. He adds that the mob, in all countries, being easily moved, look in general with concern upon criminals going to the gallows; but an English mob looked upon such scenes with extraordinary interest: they delighted to see them go through their last trials with resolution, and applauded those who were insensible enough to die as they had lived, braving the justice both of God and men: such, he might have added, as the noted robber Macpherson, of whom the old ballad says—

> "Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
> Sae dauntingly gaed he:
> He played a spring, and danced it round
> Beneath the gallows tree."

Among these traditional thieves the most noted in England, or perhaps in any country, is Robin Hood, a name which popular affection has encircled with a peculiar halo. "He robbed the rich to give to the poor;" and his reward has been an immortality of fame, a tithe of which would be thought more than sufficient to recompense a benefactor of his species. Romance and poetry have been emulous to make him all their own; and the forest of Sherwood, in which he roamed with his merry men, armed with their long bows, and clad in Lincoln green, has become the resort of pilgrims, and a classic spot sacred to his memory. The few virtues he had, which would have insured him no praise if he had been an honest man, have been blazoned forth by popular renown during seven successive centuries, and will never be forgotten while the English tongue endures. His charity to the poor, and his gallantry and respect for women, have made him the pre-eminent thief of all the world.

Among English thieves of a later date, who has not heard of Claude Duval, Dick Turpin, Jonathan Wild, and Jack Sheppard, those knights of the road and of the town, whose peculiar chivalry formed at once the dread and delight of England during the eighteenth century? Turpin's fame is unknown to no portion of the male population of England, after they have attained the age of ten. His wondrous ride from London to York has endeared him to the imagination of millions; his cruelty in placing an old woman upon a fire, to force her to tell him where she had hidden her money, is

regarded as a good joke; and his proud bearing upon the scaffold is looked upon as a virtuous action. The Abbé le Blanc, writing in 1737, says he was continually entertained with stories of Turpin—how, when he robbed gentlemen, he would generously leave them enough to continue their journey, and exact a pledge from them never to inform against him, and how scrupulous such gentlemen were in keeping their word. He was one day told a story, with which the relator was in the highest degree delighted. Turpin, or some other noted robber, stopped a man whom he knew to be very rich, with the usual salutation—"Your money or your life!" but not finding more than five or six guineas about him, he took the liberty of entreating him, in the most affable manner, never to come out so ill provided; adding that, if he fell in with him, and he had no more than such a paltry sum, he would give him a good licking. Another story, told by one of Turpin's admirers, was of a robbery he had committed upon a Mr. C. near Cambridge. He took from this gentleman his watch, his snuff-box, and all his money but two shillings, and, before he left him, required his word of honour that he would not cause him to be pursued, or brought before a justice. The promise being given, they both parted very courteously. They afterwards met at Newmarket, and renewed their acquaintance. Mr. C. kept his word religiously; he not only refrained from giving Turpin into custody, but made a boast that he had fairly won some of his money back again in an honest way. Turpin offered to bet with him on some favourite horse, and Mr. C. accepted the wager with as good a grace as he could have done from the best gentleman in England. Turpin lost his bet and paid it immediately, and was so smitten with the generous behaviour of Mr. C. that he told him how deeply he regretted that the trifling affair which had happened between them did not permit them to drink together. The narrator of this anecdote was quite proud that England was the birthplace of such a highwayman.*

* The Abbé, in the second volume, in the letter No. 79, addressed to Monsieur de Buffon, gives the following curious particulars of the robbers of 1737, which are not without interest at this day, if it were only to show the vast improvement which has taken place since that period:—"It is usual, in travelling, to put ten or a dozen guineas in a separate pocket, as a tribute to the first that comes to demand them: the right of passport, which custom has established here in favour of the robbers, who are almost

Not less familiar to the people of England is the career of Jack Sheppard, as brutal a ruffian as ever disgraced his country, but who has claims upon the popular admiration which are very generally acknowledged. He did not, like Robin Hood, plunder the rich to relieve the poor, nor rob with an uncouth sort of courtesy, like Turpin; but he escaped from Newgate with the fetters on his limbs. This achievement, more than once repeated, has encircled his felon brow with the wreath of immortality, and made him quite a pattern thief among the populace. He was no more than twenty-three years of age at the time of his execution, and he died much pitied by the crowd. His adventures were the sole topics of conversation for months; the print-shops were filled with his effigies, and a fine painting of him was made by Sir Richard Thornhill. The following complimentary verses to the artist appeared in the "British Journal" of November 28th, 1724.

"Thornhill! 'tis thine to gild with fame
Th' obscure, and raise the humble name;
To make the form elude the grave,
And Sheppard from oblivion save!

Apelles Alexander drew—
Cæsar is to Aurelius due;
Cromwell in Lilly's works doth shine,
And Sheppard, Thornhill, lives in thine!"

So high was Jack's fame that a pantomime entertainment, called "Harlequin Jack Sheppard," was devised by one Thur-

the only highway surveyors in England, has made this necessary; and accordingly the English call these fellows the 'Gentlemen of the Road,' the government letting them exercise their jurisdiction upon travellers without giving them any great molestation. To say the truth, they content themselves with only taking the money of those who obey without disputing; but, notwithstanding their boasted humanity, the lives of those who endeavour to get away are not always safe. They are very strict and severe in levying their impost; and if a man has not wherewithal to pay them, he may run the chance of getting himself knocked on the head for his poverty.

"About fifteen years ago, these robbers, with the view of maintaining their rights, fixed up papers at the doors of rich people about London, expressly forbidding all persons, of whatsoever quality or condition, from going out of town without ten guineas and a watch about them, on pain of death. In bad times, when there is little or nothing to be got on the roads, these fellows assemble in gangs, to raise contributions even in London itself; and the watchmen seldom trouble themselves to interfere with them in their vocation."

mond, and brought out with great success at Drury Lane Theatre. All the scenes were painted from nature, including the public house that the robber frequented in Claremarket, and the condemned cell from which he had made his escape in Newgate.

The Rev. Mr. Villette, the editor of the "Annals of Newgate," published in 1754, relates a curious sermon which, he says, a friend of his heard delivered by a street-preacher about the time of Jack's execution. The orator, after animadverting on the great care men took of their bodies, and the little care they bestowed upon their souls, continued as follows, by way of exemplifying the position:—"We have a remarkable instance of this in a notorious malefactor, well known by the name of Jack Sheppard. What amazing difficulties has he overcome! what astonishing things has he performed! and all for the sake of a stinking, miserable carcass, hardly worth the hanging! How dexterously did he pick the chain of his padlock with a crooked nail! how manfully he burst his fetters asunder!—climb up the chimney!—wrench out an iron bar!—break his way through a stone wall!—make the strong door of a dark entry fly before him, till he got upon the leads of the prison! then, fixing a blanket to the wall with a spike, he stole out of the chapel. How intrepidly did he descend to the top of the turner's house!—how cautiously pass down the stair, and make his escape to the street door!

"Oh! that ye were all like Jack Sheppard! Mistake me not, my brethren; I don't mean in a carnal, but in a spiritual sense, for I propose to spiritualize these things. What a shame it would be if we should not think it worth our while to take as much pains, and employ as many deep thoughts, to save our souls as he has done to preserve his body!

"Let me exhort ye, then, to open the locks of your hearts with the nail of repentance! Burst asunder the fetters of your beloved lusts!—mount the chimney of hope!—take from thence the bar of good resolution!—break through the stone wall of despair, and all the strongholds in the dark entry of the valley of the shadow of death! Raise yourselves to the leads of divine meditation!—fix the blanket of faith with the spike of the church! let yourself down to the turner's house of resignation, and descend the stairs of humility! So shall you come to the door of deliverance from the prison of ini-

quity, and escape the clutches of that old executioner the Devil!"

But popular as the name of Jack Sheppard was immediately after he had suffered the last penalty of his crimes, it was as nothing compared to the vast renown which he has acquired in these latter days, after the lapse of a century and a quarter. Poets too often, are not fully appreciated till they have been dead a hundred years, and thieves, it would appear, share the disadvantage. But posterity is grateful if our contemporaries are not; and Jack Sheppard, faintly praised in his own day, shines out in ours the hero of heroes, pre-eminent above all his fellows. Thornhill made but one picture of the illustrious robber, but Cruikshank has made dozens, and the art of the engraver has multiplied them into thousands and tens of thousands, until the populace of England have become as familiar with Jack's features as they are with their own. Jack, the romantic, is the hero of three goodly volumes, and the delight of the circulating libraries; and the theatres have been smitten with the universal enthusiasm. Managers have set their playmongers at work, and Jack's story has been reproduced in the shape of drama, melodrama, and farce, at half a dozen places of entertainment at once. Never was such a display of popular regard for a hero as was exhibited in London in 1840 for the renowned Jack Sheppard: robbery acquired additional lustre in the popular eye, and not only Englishmen, but foreigners, caught the contagion; and one of the latter, fired by the example, robbed and murdered a venerable, unoffending, and too confiding nobleman, whom it was his especial duty to have obeyed and protected. But he was a coward and a wretch;—it was a solitary crime—he had not made a daring escape from dungeon walls, or ridden from London to York, and he died amid the execrations of the people, affording a melancholy exemplification of the trite remark, that every man is not great who is desirous of being so.

Jonathan Wild, whose name has been immortalized by Fielding, was no favourite with the people. He had none of the virtues which, combined with crimes, make up the character of the great thief. He was a pitiful fellow, who informed against his comrades, and was afraid of death. This meanness was not to be forgiven by the crowd, and they

pelted him with dirt and stones on his way to Tyburn, and expressed their contempt by every possible means. How different was their conduct to Turpin and Jack Sheppard, who died in their neatest attire, with nosegays in their button-holes, and with the courage that a crowd expects! It was anticipated that the body of Turpin would have been delivered up to the surgeons for dissection, and the people seeing some men very busily employed in removing it, suddenly set upon them, rescued the body, bore it about the town in triumph, and then buried it in a very deep grave, filled with quick-lime, to hasten the process of decomposition. They would not suffer the corpse of their hero, of the man who had ridden from London to York in four-and-twenty hours to be mangled by the rude hands of unmannerly surgeons.

The death of Claude Duval would appear to have been no less triumphant. Claude was a gentlemanly thief. According to Butler, in the famous ode to his memory, he

> Taught the wild Arabs of the road
> To rob in a more gentle mode;
> Take prizes more obligingly than those
> Who never had been bred *filous;*
> And how to hang in a more graceful fashion
> Than e'er was known before to the dull English nation."

In fact, he was the pink of politeness, and his gallantry to the fair sex was proverbial. When he was caught at last, pent in "stone walls and chains and iron grates,"—their grief was in proportion to his rare merits and his great fame. Butler, says, that to his dungeon

> ——— "Came ladies from all parts,
> To offer up close prisoners their hearts,
> Which he received as tribute due—
> * * * * *
> Never did bold knight, to relieve
> Distressed dames, such dreadful feats achieve,
> As feeble damsels, for his sake,
> Would have been proud to undertake,
> And, bravely ambitious to redeem
> The world's loss and their own,
> Strove who should have the honour to lay down,
> And change a life with him."

Among the noted thieves of France, there is none to compare with the famous Aimerigot Tête-noire, who flourished in

the reign of Charles VI. This fellow was at the head of four or five hundred men, and possessed two very strong castles in Limousin and Auvergne. There was a good deal of the feudal baron about him, although he possessed no revenues but such as the road afforded him. At his death he left a singular will. "I give and bequeath," said the robber, "one thousand five hundred francs to St. George's Chapel, for such repairs as it may need. To my sweet girl who so tenderly loved me, I give two thousand five hundred; and the surplus I give to my companions. I hope they will all live as brothers, and divide it amicably among them. If they cannot agree, and the devil of contention gets among them, it is no fault of mine; and I advise them to get a good strong, sharp axe, and break open my strong box. Let them scramble for what it contains, and the Devil seize the hindmost." The people of Auvergne still recount with admiration the daring feats of this brigand.

Of later years, the French thieves have been such unmitigated scoundrels as to have left but little room for popular admiration. The famous Cartouche, whose name has become synonymous with ruffian in their language, had none of the generosity, courtesy, and devoted bravery which are so requisite to make a robber-hero. He was born at Paris, towards the end of the seventeenth century, and broken alive on the wheel in November, 1727. He was, however, sufficiently popular to have been pitied at his death, and afterwards to have formed the subject of a much-admired drama, which bore his name, and was played with great success in all the theatres of France during the years 1734, 5, and 6. In our own day the French have been more fortunate in a robber. Vidocq bids fair to rival the fame of Turpin and Jack Sheppard. Already he has become the hero of many an apocryphal tale—already his compatriots boast of his manifold achievements, and express their doubts whether any other country in Europe could produce a thief so clever, so accomplished, so gentlemanly, as Vidocq.

Germany has its Schinderhannes, Hungary its Schubry, and Italy and Spain a whole host of brigands, whose names and exploits are familiar as household words in the mouths of the children and populace of those countries.

The Italian banditti are renowned over the world; and

many of them are not only very religious (after a fashion), but very charitable. Charity from such a source is so unexpected, that the people dote upon them for it. One of them, when he fell into the hands of the police, exclaimed, as they led him away, "Ho fatto più carità!"—"I have given away more in charity than any three convents in these provinces." And the fellow spoke truth.

In Lombardy, the people cherish the memory of two notorious robbers, who flourished about two centuries ago under the Spanish government. Their story, according to Macfarlane, is contained in a little book well known to all the children of the province, and read by them with much more gusto than their Bibles.

Schinderhannes, the robber of the Rhine, is a great favourite on the banks of the river which he so long kept in awe. Many amusing stories are related by the peasantry of the scurvy tricks he played off upon rich Jews, or too-presuming officers of justice—of his princely generosity, and undaunted courage. In short, they are proud of him, and would no more consent to have the memory of his achievements dissociated from their river than they would to have the rock of Ehrenbreitstein blown to atoms by gunpowder.

There is another robber-hero, of whose character and exploits the people of Germany speak admiringly. Mausch Nadel was captain of a considerable band that infested the Rhine, Switzerland, Alsatia, and Lorraine, during the years 1824, 5, and 6. Like Jack Sheppard, he endeared himself to the populace by his most hazardous escape from prison. Being confined, at Bremen, in a dungeon, on the third story of the prison of that town, he contrived to let himself down without exciting the vigilance of the sentinels, and to swim across the Weser, though heavily laden with irons. When about half way over, he was espied by a sentinel, who fired at him, and shot him in the calf of the leg: but the undaunted robber struck out manfully, reached the shore, and was out of sight before the officers of justice could get ready their boats to follow him. He was captured again in 1826, tried at Mayence, and sentenced to death. He was a tall, strong, handsome man, and his fate, villain as he was, excited much sympathy all over Germany. The ladies especially were loud in their regret that nothing could be done to save a hero so

good-looking, and of adventures so romantic, from the knife of the headsman.

Mr. Macfarlane, in speaking of Italian banditti, remarks, that the abuses of the Catholic religion, with its confessions and absolutions, have tended to promote crime of this description. But, he adds, more truly, that priests and monks have not done half the mischief which has been perpetrated by ballad-mongers and story-tellers. If he had said playwrights also, the list would have been complete. In fact, the theatre, which can only expect to prosper, in a pecuniary sense, by pandering to the tastes of the people, continually recurs to the annals of thieves and banditti for its most favourite heroes. These theatrical robbers, with their picturesque attire, wild haunts, jolly, reckless, devil-may-care manners, take a wonderful hold upon the imagination, and, whatever their advocates may say to the contrary, exercise a very pernicious influence upon public morals. In the Memoirs of the Duke of Guise upon the Revolution of Naples in 1647 and 1648, it is stated, that the manners, dress, and mode of life of the Neapolitan banditti were rendered so captivating upon the stage, that the authorities found it absolutely necessary to forbid the representation of dramas in which they figured, and even to prohibit their costume at the masquerades. So numerous were the banditti at this time, that the Duke found no difficulty in raising an army of them, to aid him in his endeavours to seize on the throne of Naples. He thus describes them:* "They were three thousand five hundred men, of whom the oldest came short of five-and-forty years, and the youngest was above twenty. They were all tall and well made, with long black hair, for the most part curled, coats of black Spanish leather, with sleeves of velvet, or cloth of gold, cloth breeches with gold lace, most of them scarlet; girdles of velvet, laced with gold, with two pistols on each side; a cutlass hanging at a belt, suitably trimmed, three fingers broad and two feet long; a hawking-bag at their girdle, and a powder-flask hung about their neck with a great silk riband. Some of them carried firelocks, and others, blunderbusses; they had all good shoes, with silk stockings, and every one a cap of cloth of gold or

* See also "Foreign Quarterly Review," vol. iv. p. 398.

cloth of silver, of different colours, on his head, which was very delightful to the eye."

"The Beggars' Opera," in our own country, is another instance of the admiration that thieves excite upon the stage. Of the extraordinary success of this piece, when first produced, the following account is given in the notes to "The Dunciad," and quoted by Johnson in his "Lives of the Poets." "This piece was received with greater applause than was ever known. Besides being acted in London sixty-three days without interruption, and renewed the next season with equal applause, it spread into all the great towns of England; was played in many places to the thirtieth and fortieth time; at Bath and Bristol, &c., fifty. It made its progress into Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, where it was performed twenty-four days successively. The ladies carried about with them the favourite songs of it in fans, and houses were furnished with it in screens. The fame of it was not confined to the author only. The person who acted Polly, till then obscure, became all at once the favourite of the town;* her pictures were engraved and sold in great numbers; her life written, books of letters and verses to her published, and pamphlets made even of her sayings and jests. Futhermore, it drove out of England, for that season, the Italian Opera, which had carried all before it for ten years." Dr. Johnson, in his Life of the author, says, that Herring, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, censured the Opera, as giving encouragement, not only to vice, but to crimes, by making the highwayman the hero, and dismissing him at last unpunished; and adds, that it was even said, that after the exhibition the gangs of robbers were evidently multiplied. The Doctor doubts the assertion, giving as his reason that highwaymen and housebreakers seldom frequent the play-house, and that it was not possible for any one to imagine that he might rob with safety, because he saw Macheath reprieved upon the stage. But if Johnson had wished to be convinced, he might very easily have discovered that highwaymen and housebreakers did frequent the theatre, and that nothing was more probable than that a laughable representation

* Lavinia Fenton, afterwards Duchess of Bolton.

of successful villany should induce the young and the already vicious to imitate it. Besides, there is the weighty authority of Sir John Fielding, the chief magistrate of Bow Street, who asserted positively, and proved his assertion by the records of his office, that the number of thieves was greatly increased at the time when that opera was so popular.

We have another instance of the same result much nearer our own times. Schiller's "Raüber," that wonderful play, written by a green youth, perverted the taste and imagination of all the young men in Germany. An accomplished critic of our own country (Hazlitt), speaking of this play, says it was the first he ever read, and such was the effect it produced on him, that "it stunned him, like a blow." After the lapse of five-and-twenty years he could not forget it; it was still, to use his own words, "an old dweller in the chambers of his brain," and he had not even then recovered enough from it, to describe how it was. The high-minded, metaphysical thief, its hero, was so warmly admired, that several raw students, longing to imitate a character they thought so noble, actually abandoned their homes and their colleges, and betook themselves to the forests and wilds to levy contributions upon travellers. They thought they would, like Moor, plunder the rich, and deliver eloquent soliloquies to the setting sun or the rising moon; relieve the poor when they met them, and drink flasks of Rhenish with their free companions in rugged mountain passes, or in tents in the thicknesses of the forests. But a little experience wonderfully cooled their courage; they found that real, every-day robbers were very unlike the conventional banditti of the stage, and that three months in prison, with bread and water for their fare, and damp straw to lie upon, was very well to read about by their own firesides, but not very agreeable to undergo in their own proper persons.

Lord Byron, with his soliloquizing, high-souled thieves, has, in a slight degree, perverted the taste of the greenhorns and incipient rhymesters of his country. As yet, however, they have shown more good sense than their fellows of Germany, and have not taken to the woods or the highways. Much as they admire Conrad the Corsair, they will not go to sea, and hoist the black flag in emulation of him. By words

only, and not by deeds, they testify their admiration, and deluge the periodicals and music-shops of the land with verses describing pirates' and bandits' brides, and robber adventures of every kind.

But it is the playwright who does most harm; and Byron has fewer sins of this nature to answer for than Gay or Schiller, and the modern dramatizers of Jack Sheppard. With the aid of scenery, fine dresses, and music, and the very false notions they convey, they vitiate the public taste, not knowing,

—— "Vulgaires rimeurs!
Quelle force ont les arts pour demolir les mœurs."

In the penny theatres that abound in the poor and populous districts of London, and which are chiefly frequented by striplings of idle and dissolute habits, tales of thieves and murderers are more admired, and draw more crowded audiences, than any other species of representation. There the footpad, the burglar, and the highwayman are portrayed in unnatural colours, and give pleasant lessons in crime to their delighted listeners. There the deepest tragedy and the broadest farce are represented in the career of the murderer and the thief, and are applauded in proportion to their depth and their breadth. There, whenever a crime of unusual atrocity is committed, it is brought out afresh, with all its disgusting incidents copied from the life, for the amusement of those who will one day become its imitators.

With the mere reader the case is widely different; and most people have a partiality for knowing the adventures of noted rogues. Even in fiction they are delightful: witness the eventful story of Gil Blas de Santillane, and of that great rascal, Don Guzman d'Alfarache. Here there is no fear of imitation. Poets, too, without doing mischief, may sing of such heroes when they please, wakening our sympathies for the sad fate of Gilderoy, or Macpherson the Dauntless; or celebrating in undying verse the wrongs and the revenge of the great thief of Scotland, Rob Roy. If, by the music of their sweet rhymes, they can convince the world that such heroes are but mistaken philosophers, born a few

ages too late, and having both a theoretical and practical love for

> "The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> That they should keep who can,"

the world may, perhaps, become wiser, and consent to some better distribution of its good things, by means of which thieves may be reconciled to the age, and the age to them. The probability, however, seems to be, that the charmers will charm in vain, charm they ever so wisely.

INFLUENCE OF POLITICS AND RELIGION ON THE HAIR AND BEARD.

> Speak with respect and honour
> Both of the beard and the beard's owner.
>
> HUDIBRAS.

THE famous declaration of St. Paul, "that long hair was a shame unto a man," has been made the pretext for many singular enactments, both of civil and ecclesiastical governments. The fashion of the hair and the cut of the beard were state questions in France and England from the establishment of Christianity until the fifteenth century.

We find, too, that in much earlier times men were not permitted to do as they liked with their own hair. Alexander the Great thought that the beards of his soldiery afforded convenient handles for the enemy to lay hold of, preparatory to cutting off their heads; and, with the view of depriving them of this advantage, he ordered the whole of his army to be closely shaven. His notions of courtesy toward an enemy were quite different from those entertained by the North American Indians, amongst whom it is held a point of honour to allow one "chivalrous lock" to grow, that the foe, in taking the scalp, may have something to catch hold of.

At one time, long hair was the symbol of sovereignty in Europe. We learn from Gregory of Tours that, among the successors of Clovis, it was the exclusive privilege of the royal family to have their hair long and curled. The nobles, equal to kings in power, would not show any inferiority in this respect, and wore not only their hair, but their beards, of an enormous length. This fashion lasted, with but slight changes, till the time of Louis the Debonnaire, but his successors, up to Hugh Capet, wore their hair short, by way of distinction. Even the serfs had set all regulation at defiance, and allowed their locks and beards to grow.

At the time of the invasion of England by William the Conqueror, the Normans wore their hair very short. Harold, in his progress towards Hastings, sent forward spies to view the strength and number of the enemy. They reported, amongst other things, on their return, that "the host did almost seem to be priests, because they had all their face and both their lips shaven." The fashion among the English at the time was to wear the hair long upon the head and the upper lip, but to shave the chin. When the haughty victors had divided the broad lands of the Saxon thanes and franklins among them, when tyranny of every kind was employed to make the English feel that they were indeed a subdued and broken nation, the latter encouraged the growth of their hair, that they might resemble as little as possible their cropped and shaven masters.

This fashion was exceedingly displeasing to the clergy, and prevailed to a considerable extent in France and Germany. Towards the end of the eleventh century, it was decreed by the Pope, and zealously supported by the ecclesiastical authorities all over Europe, that such persons as wore long hair should be excommunicated while living, and not be prayed for when dead. William of Malmesbury relates, that the famous St. Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester, was peculiarly indignant whenever he saw a man with long hair. He declaimed against the practice as one highly immoral, criminal, and beastly. He continually carried a small knife in his pocket, and whenever anybody, offending in this respect, knelt before him to receive his blessing, he would whip it out slily, and cut off a handful, and then, throwing it in his face, tell him to cut off all the rest, or he would go to hell.

But fashion, which at times it is possible to move with a wisp, stands firm against a lever; and men preferred to run the risk of damnation to parting with the superfluity of their hair. In the time of Henry I., Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, found it necessary to republish the famous decree of excommunication and outlawry against the offenders; but, as the court itself had begun to patronise curls, the fulminations of the church were unavailing. Henry I. and his nobles wore their hair in long ringlets down their backs and shoulders, and became a *scandalum magnatum* in the eyes of the godly. One Serlo, the King's chaplain, was so grieved in spirit at

the impiety of his master, that he preached a sermon from the well-known text of St. Paul, before the assembled court, in which he drew so dreadful a picture of the torments that awaited them in the other world, that several of them burst into tears, and wrung their hair, as if they would have pulled it out by the roots. Henry himself was observed to weep. The priest, seeing the impression he had made, determined to strike while the iron was hot, and, pulling a pair of scissors from his pocket, cut the king's hair in presence of them all. Several of the principal courtiers consented to do the like, and, for a short time, long hair appeared to be going out of fashion. But the courtiers thought, after the first glow of their penitence had been cooled by reflection, that the clerical Dalilah had shorn them of their strength, and, in less than six months, they were as great sinners as ever.

Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had been a monk of Bec, in Normandy, and who had signalized himself at Rouen by his fierce opposition to long hair, was still anxious to work a reformation in this matter. But his pertinacity was far from pleasing to the King, who had finally made up his mind to wear ringlets. There were other disputes, of a more serious nature, between them; so that when the Archbishop died, the King was so glad to be rid of him, that he allowed the see to remain vacant for five years. Still the cause had other advocates, and every pulpit in the land resounded with anathemas against that disobedient and long-haired generation. But all was of no avail. Stowe, in writing of this period, asserts, on the authority of some more ancient chronicler, "that men, forgetting their birth, transformed themselves, by the length of their haires, into the semblance of woman kind;" and that when their hair decayed from age, or other causes, "they knit about their heads certain rolls and braidings of false hair." At last accident turned the tide of fashion. A knight of the court, who was exceedingly proud of his beauteous locks, dreamed one night that, as he lay in bed, the devil sprang upon him, and endeavoured to choke him with his own hair. He started in affright, and actually found that he had a great quantity of hair in his mouth. Sorely stricken in conscience, and looking upon the dream as a warning from Heaven, he set about the work of reformation, and cut off his luxuriant tresses the same night. The story

was soon bruited abroad; of course it was made the most of by the clergy, and the knight, being a man of influence and consideration, and the acknowledged leader of the fashion, his example, aided by priestly exhortations, was very generally imitated. Men appeared almost as decent as St. Wulstan himself could have wished, the dream of a dandy having proved more efficacious than the entreaties of a saint. But, as Stowe informs us, "scarcely was one year past, when all that thought themselves courtiers fell into the former vice, and contended with women in their long hairs." Henry, the King, appears to have been quite uninfluenced by the dreams of others, for even his own would not induce him a second time to undergo a cropping from priestly shears. It is said, that he was much troubled at this time by disagreeable visions. Having offended the church in this and other respects, he could get no sound refreshing sleep, and used to imagine that he saw all the bishops, abbots, and monks of every degree, standing around his bedside, and threatening to belabour him with their pastoral staves; which sight, we are told, so frightened him, that he often started naked out of his bed, and attacked the phantoms sword in hand. Grimbalde, his physician, who, like most of his fraternity at that day, was an ecclesiastic, never hinted that his dreams were the result of a bad digestion, but told him to shave his head, be reconciled to the Church, and reform himself with alms and prayer. But he would not take this good advice, and it was not until he had been nearly drowned a year afterwards, in a violent storm at sea, that he repented of his evil ways, cut his hair short, and paid proper deference to the wishes of the clergy.

In France, the thunders of the Vatican with regard to long curly hair were hardly more respected than in England. Louis VII., however, was more obedient than his brother-king, and cropped himself as closely as a monk, to the great sorrow of all the gallants of his court. His Queen, the gay, haughty, and pleasure-seeking Eleanor of Guienne, never admired him in this trim, and continually reproached him with imitating, not only the head-dress, but the asceticism of the monks. From this cause, a coldness arose between them. The lady proving at last unfaithful to her shaven and indifferent lord, they were divorced, and the Kings of France lost the rich provinces of Guienne and Poitou, which were her dowry. She

soon after bestowed her hand and her possessions upon Henry Duke of Normandy, afterwards Henry II. of England, and thus gave the English sovereigns that strong footing in France which was for so many centuries the cause of such long and bloody wars between the nations.

When the Crusades had drawn all the smart young fellows into Palestine, the clergy did not find it so difficult to convince the staid burghers who remained in Europe, of the enormity of long hair. During the absence of Richard Cœur de Lion, his English subjects not only cut their hair close, but shaved their faces. William Fitzosbert, or Long-beard, the great demagogue of that day, reintroduced among the people who claimed to be of Saxon origin the fashion of long hair. He did this with a view of making them as unlike as possible to the citizens and the Normans. He wore his own beard hanging down to his waist, from whence the name by which he is best known to posterity.

The Church never showed itself so great an enemy to the beard as to long hair on the head. It generally allowed fashion to take its own course, both with regard to the chin and the upper lip. This fashion varied continually; for we find that, in little more than a century after the time of Richard I., when beards were short, that they had again become so long as to be mentioned in the famous epigram made by the Scots who visited London in 1327, when David son of Robert Bruce, was married to Joan, the sister of King Edward. This epigram, which was stuck on the church-door of St. Peter Stangate, ran as follows:—

"Long beards heartlesse,
Painted hoods witlesse,
Gray coats gracelesse,
Make England thriftlesse."

When the Emperor Charles V. ascended the throne of Spain, he had no beard. It was not to be expected that the obsequious parasites who always surround a monarch, could presume to look more virile than their master. Immediately all the courtiers appeared beardless, with the exception of such few grave old men as had outgrown the influence of fashion, and who had determined to die bearded as they had lived. Sober people in general saw this revolution with

sorrow and alarm, and thought that every manly virtue would be banished with the beard. It became at the time a common saying,—

"Desde que no hay barba, no hay mas alma."
We have no longer souls since we have lost our beards.

In France, also, the beard fell into disrepute after the death of Henry IV., from the mere reason that his successor was too young to have one. Some of the more immediate friends of the great Béarnais, and his minister Sully among the rest, refused to part with their beards, notwithstanding the jeers of the new generation.

Who does not remember the division of England into two great parties of Roundheads and Cavaliers? In those days, every species of vice and iniquity was thought by the Puritans to lurk in the long curly tresses of the Monarchists, while the latter imagined that their opponents were as destitute of wit, of wisdom, and of virtue, as they were of hair. A man's locks were the symbol of his creed, both in politics and religion. The more abundant the hair, the more scant the faith; and the balder the head, the more sincere the piety.

But among all the instances of the interference of governments with men's hair, the most extraordinary, not only for its daring but for its success, is that of Peter the Great, in 1705. By this time, fashion had condemned the beard in every other country in Europe, and with a voice more potent than Popes or Emperors, had banished it from civilized society. But this only made the Russians cling more fondly to their ancient ornament, as a mark to distinguish them from foreigners, whom they hated. Peter, however, resolved that they should be shaven. If he had been a man deeply read in history, he might have hesitated before he attempted so despotic an attack upon the time-hallowed customs and prejudices of his countrymen; but he was not. He did not know or consider the danger of the innovation; he only listened to the promptings of his own indomitable will, and his fiat went forth, that not only the army, but all ranks of the citizens, from the nobles to the serfs, should shave their beards. A certain time was given, that people might get over the first throes of their repugnance, after which every man who chose

to retain his beard was to pay a tax of one hundred roubles. The priests and the serfs were put on a lower footing, and allowed to retain theirs upon payment of a copeck every time they passed the gate of a city. Great discontent existed in consequence, but the dreadful fate of the Strelitzes was too recent to be forgotten, and thousands who had the will had not the courage to revolt. As is well remarked by a writer in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," they thought it wiser to cut off their beards than to run the risk of incensing a man who would make no scruple in cutting off their heads. Wiser, too, than the popes and bishops of a former age, he did not threaten them with external damnation, but made them pay in hard cash the penalty of their disobedience. For many years, a very considerable revenue was collected from this source. The collectors gave in receipt for its payment a small copper coin, struck expressly for the purpose, and called the "*borodováia*," or "the bearded." On one side it bore the figure of a nose, mouth, and moustachios, with a long bushy beard, surmounted by the words, "*Deuyee Vyeatee*," "money received;" the whole encircled by a wreath, and stamped with the black eagle of Russia. On the reverse, it bore the date of the year. Every man who chose to wear a beard was obliged to produce this receipt on his entry into a town. Those who were refractory, and refused to pay the tax, were thrown into prison.

Since that day, the rulers of modern Europe have endeavoured to persuade, rather than to force, in all matters pertaining to fashion. The Vatican troubles itself no more about beards or ringlets, and men may become hairy as bears, if such is their fancy, without fear of excommunication or deprivation of their political rights. Folly has taken a new start, and cultivates the moustachio.

Even upon this point governments will not let men alone. Religion as yet has not meddled with it; but perhaps it will; and politics already influence it considerably. Before the revolution of 1830, neither the French nor Belgian citizens were remarkable for their moustachios; but, after that event, there was hardly a shopkeeper either in Paris or Brussels whose upper lip did not suddenly become hairy with real or mock moustachios. During a temporary triumph gained by the Dutch soldiers over the citizens of Louvain, in October,

1830, it became a standing joke against the patriots, that they shaved their faces clean immediately; and the wits of the Dutch army asserted, that they had gathered moustachios enough from the denuded lips of the Belgians to stuff mattresses for all the sick and wounded in their hospital.

The last folly of this kind is still more recent. In the German newspapers, of August, 1838, appeared an ordonnance, signed by the King of Bavaria, forbidding civilians, on any pretence whatever, to wear moustachios, and commanding the police and other authorities to arrest, and cause to be shaved, the offending parties. "Strange to say," adds "Le Droit," the journal from which this account is taken, "moustachios disappeared immediately, like leaves from the trees in autumn; everybody made haste to obey the royal order, and not one person was arrested."

The King of Bavaria, a rhymester of some celebrity, has taken a good many poetical licenses in his time. His license in this matter appears neither poetical nor reasonable. It is to be hoped that he will not take it into his royal head to make his subjects shave theirs; nothing but that is wanting to complete their degradation.

DUELS AND ORDEALS.

There was an ancient sage philosopher
Who swore the world, as he could prove,
Was made of fighting. * * *

HUDIBRAS.

MOST writers, in accounting for the origin of duelling, derive it from the warlike habits of those barbarous nations who overran Europe in the early centuries of the Christian era, and who knew no mode so effectual for settling their differences as the point of the sword. In fact, duelling, taken in its primitive and broadest sense, means nothing more than combatting, and is the universal resort of all wild animals, including man, to gain or defend their possessions, or avenge their insults. Two dogs who tear each other for a bone, or two bantams fighting on a dunghill for the love of some beautiful hen, or two fools on Wimbledon Common, shooting at each other to satisfy the laws of offended honour, stand on the same footing in this respect, and are, each and all, mere duellists. As civilization advanced, the best-informed men naturally grew ashamed of such a mode of adjusting disputes, and the promulgation of some sort of laws for obtaining redress for injuries was the consequence. Still there were many cases in which the allegations of an accuser could not be rebutted by any positive proof on the part of the accused; and in all these, which must have been exceedingly numerous in the early stages of European society, the combat was resorted to. From its decision there was no appeal. God was supposed to nerve the arm of the combatant whose cause was just, and to grant him the victory over his opponent. As Montesquieu well remarks,* this belief was not unnatural

* "Esprit des Loix," liv. xxviii. chap. xvii.

among a people just emerging from barbarism. Their manners being wholly warlike, the man deficient in courage, the prime virtue of his fellows, was not unreasonably suspected of other vices besides cowardice, which is generally found to be co-existent with treachery. He, therefore, who showed himself most valiant in the encounter, was absolved by public opinion from any crime with which he might be charged. As a necessary consequence, society would have been reduced to its original elements, if the men of thought, as distinguished from the men of action, had not devised some means for taming the unruly passions of their fellows. With this view, governments commenced by restricting within the narrowest possible limits the cases in which it was lawful to prove or deny guilt by the single combat. By the law of Gondebaldus, King of the Burgundians, passed in the year 501, the proof by combat was allowed in all legal proceedings, in lieu of swearing. In the time of Charlemagne, the Burgundian practice had spread over the empire of the Francs, and not only the suitors for justice, but the witnesses, and even the judges, were obliged to defend their cause, their evidence, or their decision, at the point of the sword. Louis the Debonnaire, his successor, endeavoured to remedy the growing evil, by permitting the duel only in appeals of felony, in civil cases, or issue joined in a writ of right, and in cases of the court of chivalry, or attacks upon a man's knighthood. None were exempt from these trials, but women, the sick and the maimed, and persons under fifteen or above sixty years of age. Ecclesiastics were allowed to produce champions in their stead. This practice, in the course of time, extended to all trials of civil and criminal cases, which had to be decided by battle.

The clergy, whose dominion was an intellectual one, never approved of a system of jurisprudence which tended so much to bring all things under the rule of the strongest arm. From the first they set their faces against duelling, and endeavoured, as far as the prejudices of their age would allow them, to curb the warlike spirit, so alien from the principles of religion. In the Council of Valentia, and afterwards in the Council of Trent, they excommunicated all persons engaged in duelling, and not only them, but even the assistants and spectators, declaring the custom to be hellish and detestable, and intro-

duced by the devil for the destruction both of body and soul. They added, also, that princes who connived at duels should be deprived of all temporal power, jurisdiction, and dominion over the places where they had permitted them to be fought. It will be seen hereafter that this clause only encouraged the practice which it was intended to prevent.

But it was the blasphemous error of these early ages to expect that the Almighty, whenever he was called upon, would work a miracle in favour of a person unjustly accused. The priesthood, in condemning the duel, did not condemn the principle on which it was founded. They still encouraged the popular belief of Divine interference in all the disputes or differences that might arise among nations or individuals. It was the very same principle that regulated the ordeals, which, with all their influence, they supported against the duel. By the former, the power of deciding the guilt or innocence was vested wholly in their hands, while, by the latter, they enjoyed no power or privilege at all. It is not to be wondered at, that for this reason, if for no other, they should have endeavoured to settle all differences by the peaceful mode. While that prevailed, they were as they wished to be, the first party in the state; but while the strong arm of individual prowess was allowed to be the judge in all doubtful cases, their power and influence became secondary to those of the nobility.

Thus, it was not the mere hatred of bloodshed which induced them to launch the thunderbolts of excommunication against the combatants; it was a desire to retain the power, which, to do them justice, they were, in those times, the persons best qualified to wield. The germs of knowledge and civilization lay within the bounds of their order; for they were the representatives of the intellectual, as the nobility were of the physical power of man. To centralize this power in the Church, and make it the judge of the last resort in all appeals, both in civil and criminal cases, they instituted five modes of trial, the management of which lay wholly in their hands. These were the oath upon the Evangelists; the ordeal of the cross, and the fire ordeal, for persons in the higher ranks; the water ordeal, for the humbler classes; and, lastly, the *Corsned*, or bread and cheese ordeal, for members of their own body.

The oath upon the Evangelists was taken in the following manner: the accused who was received to this proof, says Paul Hay, Count du Chastelet, in his Memoirs of Bertrand du Guesclin, swore upon a copy of the New Testament, and on the relics of the holy martyrs, or on their tombs, that he was innocent of the crime imputed to him. He was also obliged to find twelve persons, of acknowledged probity, who should take oath, at the same time, that they believed him innocent. This mode of trial led to very great abuse, especially in cases of disputed inheritance, where the hardest swearer was certain of the victory. This abuse was one of the principal causes which led to the preference given to the trial by battle. It is not at all surprising that a feudal baron or captain of the early ages, should have preferred the chances of a fair fight with his opponent, to a mode by which firm perjury would always be successful.

The trial by, or judgment of, the cross, which Charlemagne begged his sons to have recourse to, in cases of disputes arising between them, was performed thus:—When a person accused of any crime has declared his innocence upon oath, and appealed to the cross for its judgment in his favour, he was brought into the church, before the altar. The priests previously prepared two sticks exactly like one another, upon one of which was carved a figure of the cross. They were both wrapped up with great care and many ceremonies, in a quantity of fine wool, and laid upon the altar, or on the relics of the saints. A solemn prayer was then offered up to God, that he would be pleased to discover, by the judgment of his holy cross, whether the accused person were innocent or guilty. A priest then approached the altar, and took up one of the sticks, and the assistants unswathed it reverently. If it was marked with the cross, the accused person was innocent; if unmarked, he was guilty. It would be unjust to assert, that the judgments thus delivered were, in all cases, erroneous; and it would be absurd to believe that they were left altogether to chance. Many true judgments were doubtless given, and, in all probability, most conscientiously; for we cannot but believe that the priests endeavoured beforehand to convince themselves by secret inquiry and a strict examination of the circumstances, whether the appellant were innocent or guilty, and that they took up the crossed or uncrossed

stick accordingly. Although, to all other observers, the sticks, as enfolded in the wool, might appear exactly similar, those who enwrapped them could, without any difficulty, distinguish the one from the other.

By the fire-ordeal the power of deciding was just as unequivocally left in their hands. It was generally believed that fire would not burn the innocent, and the clergy, of course, took care that the innocent, or such as it was their pleasure or interest to declare so, should be so warned before undergoing the ordeal, as to preserve themselves without any difficulty from the fire. One mode of ordeal was to place red-hot ploughshares on the ground at certain distances, and then, blindfolding the accused person, make him walk barefooted over them. If he stepped regularly in the vacant spaces, avoiding the fire, he was adjudged innocent; if he burned himself, he was declared guilty. As none but the clergy interfered with the arrangement of the ploughshares, they could always calculate beforehand the result of the ordeal. To find a person guilty, they had only to place them at irregular distances, and the accused was sure to tread upon one of them. When Emma, the wife of King Ethelred, and mother of Edward the Confessor, was accused of a guilty familiarity with Alwyn, Bishop of Winchester, she cleared her character in this manner. The reputation, not only of their order, but of a queen, being at stake, a verdict of guilty was not to be apprehended from any ploughshares which priests had the heating of. This ordeal was called the *Judicium Dei*, and sometimes the *Vulgaris Purgatio*, and might also be tried by several other methods. One was to hold in the hand, unhurt, a piece of red-hot iron, of the weight of one, two, or three pounds. When we read not only that men with hard hands, but women of softer and more delicate skin, could do this with impunity, we must be convinced that the hands were previously rubbed with some preservative, or that the apparently hot iron was merely cold iron painted red. Another mode was to plunge the naked arm into a caldron of boiling water. The priests then enveloped it in several folds of linen and flannel, and kept the patient confined within the church, and under their exclusive care, for three days. If, at the end of that time, the arm

appeared without a scar, the innocence of the accused person was firmly established.*

As regards the water-ordeal, the same trouble was not taken. It was a trial only for the poor and humble, and, whether they sank or swam was thought of very little consequence. Like the witches of more modern times, the accused were thrown into a pond or river.; if they sank, and were drowned, their surviving friends had the consolation of knowing that they were innocent; if they swam, they were guilty. In either case society was rid of them.

But of all the ordeals, that which the clergy reserved for themselves was the one least likely to cause any member of their corps to be declared guilty. The most culpable monster in existence came off clear when tried by this method. It was called the *Corsned*, and was thus performed. A piece of barley bread and a piece of cheese were laid upon the altar, and the accused priest, in his full canonicals, and surrounded by all the pompous adjuncts of Roman ceremony, pronounced certain conjurations, and prayed with great fervency for several minutes. The burden of his prayer was, that if he were guilty of the crime laid to his charge, God would send his angel Gabriel to stop his throat, that he

* Very similar to this is the fire-ordeal of the modern Hindoos, which is thus described in Forbes's "Oriental Memoirs," vol. i. c. xi.—"When a man, accused of a capital crime, chooses to undergo the ordeal trial, he is closely confined for several days; his right hand and arm are covered with thick wax-cloth, tied up and sealed, in the presence of proper officers, to prevent deceit. In the English districts the covering was always sealed with the Company's arms, and the prisoner placed under a European guard. At the time fixed for the ordeal, a caldron of oil is placed over a fire; when it boils, a piece of money is dropped into the vessel; the prisoner's arm is unsealed, and washed in the presence of his judges and accusers. During this part of the ceremony, the attendant Brahmins supplicate the Deity. On receiving their benediction, the accused plunges his hand into the boiling fluid, and takes out the coin. The arm is afterwards again sealed up until the time appointed for a re-examination. The seal is then broken: if no blemish appears, the prisoner is declared innocent; if the contrary, he suffers the punishment due to his crime." * * * * On this trial the accused thus addresses the element before plunging his hand into the boiling oil:—"Thou, O fire! pervadest all things. O cause of purity! who givest evidence of virtue and of sin, declare the truth in this my hand!" If no juggling were practised, the decisions by this ordeal would be all the same way; but, as some are by this means declared guilty, and others innocent, it is clear that the Brahmins, like the Christian priests of the middle ages, practise some deception in saving those whom they wish to be thought guiltless.

might not be able to swallow the bread and cheese. There is no instance upon record of a priest's having been choked in this manner.*

When, under Pope Gregory VII., it was debated whether the Gregorian chant should be introduced into Castile, instead of the Musarabic, given by St. Isidore, of Seville, to the churches of that kingdom, very much ill feeling was excited. The churches refused to receive the novelty, and it was proposed that the affair should be decided by a battle between two champions, one chosen from each side. The clergy would not consent to a mode of settlement which they considered impious, but had no objection to try the merits of each chant by the fire ordeal. A great fire was accordingly made, and a book of the Gregorian and one of the Musarabic chant were thrown into it, that the flames might decide which was most agreeable to God by refusing to burn it. Cardinal Baronius, who says he was an eye-witness of the miracle, relates, that the book of the Gregorian chant was no sooner laid upon the fire, than it leaped out uninjured, visibly, and with a great noise. Every one present thought that the saints had decided in favour of Pope Gregory. After a slight interval, the fire was extinguished; but, wonderful to relate! the other book of St. Isidore was found covered with ashes, but not injured in the slightest degree. The flames had not even warmed it. Upon this it was resolved, that both were alike agreeable to God, and that they should be used by turns in all the churches of Seville.†

If the ordeals had been confined to questions like this, the laity would have had little or no objection to them; but when they were introduced as decisive in all the disputes that might arise between man and man, the opposition of all those

* An ordeal very like this is still practised in India. Consecrated rice is the article chosen, instead of bread and cheese. Instances are not rare in which, through the force of the imagination, guilty persons are not able to swallow a single grain. Conscious of their crime, and fearful of the punishment of Heaven, they feel a suffocating sensation in their throat when they attempt it, and they fall on their knees, and confess all that is laid to their charge. The same thing, no doubt would have happened with the bread and cheese of the Roman church, if it had been applied to any others but ecclesiastics. The latter had too much wisdom to be caught in a trap of their own setting.

† Histoire de Messire Bertrand du Guesclin, par Paul Hay du Chastelet Livre i. chap. xix.

whose prime virtue was personal bravery, was necessarily excited. In fact, the nobility, from a very early period, began to look with jealous eyes upon them. They were not slow to perceive their true purport, which was no other than to make the Church the last court of appeal in all cases, both civil and criminal: and not only did the nobility prefer the ancient mode of single combat from this cause, in itself a sufficient one, but they clung to it because an acquittal gained by those displays of courage and address which the battle afforded, was more creditable in the eyes of their compeers, than one which it required but little or none of either to accomplish. To these causes may be added another, which was, perhaps, more potent than either, in raising the credit of the judicial combat at the expense of the ordeal. The noble institution of chivalry was beginning to take root, and, notwithstanding the clamours of the clergy, war was made the sole business of life, and the only elegant pursuit of the aristocracy. The fine spirit of honour was introduced, any attack upon which was only to be avenged in the lists, within sight of the applauding crowds, whose verdict of approbation was far more gratifying than the cold and formal acquittal of the ordeal. Lothaire, the son of Louis I., abolished that by fire and the trial of the cross within his dominions; but in England they were allowed so late as the time of Henry III., in the early part of whose reign they were prohibited by an order of council. In the mean time, the Crusades had brought the institution of chivalry to the full height of perfection. The chivalric spirit soon achieved the downfall of the ordeal system, and established the judicial combat on a basis too firm to be shaken. It is true that with the fall of chivalry, as an institution, fell the tournament, and the encounter in the lists; but the duel, their offspring, has survived to this day, defying the efforts of sages and philosophers to eradicate it. Among all the errors bequeathed to us by a barbarous age, it has proved the most pertinacious. It has put variance between men's reason and their honour; put the man of sense on a level with the fool, and made thousands who condemn it submit to it, or practise it.

Those who are curious to see the manner in which these combats were regulated, may consult the learned Montesquieu, where they will find a copious summary of the code of

ancient duelling.* Truly does he remark, in speaking of the clearness and excellence of the arrangements, that, as there were many wise matters which were conducted in a very foolish manner, so there were many foolish matters conducted very wisely. No greater exemplification of it could be given, than the wise and religious rules of the absurd and blasphemous trial by battle.

In the ages that intervened between the Crusades and the new era that was opened out by the invention of gunpowder and printing, a more rational system of legislation took root. The inhabitants of cities, engaged in the pursuits of trade and industry, were content to acquiesce in the decisions of their judges and magistrates whenever any differences arose among them. Unlike the class above them, their habits and manners did not lead them to seek the battle-field on every slight occasion. A dispute as to the price of a sack of corn, a bale of broadcloth, or a cow, could be more satisfactorily adjusted before the mayor or bailiff of their district. Even the martial knights and nobles, quarrelsome as they were, began to see that the trial by battle would lose its dignity and splendour if too frequently resorted to. Governments also shared this opinion, and on several occasions restricted the cases in which it was legal to proceed to this extremity. In France, before the time of Louis IX., duels were permitted only in cases of *Lèse Majesty*, *Rape*, *Incendiarism*, *Assassination*, and *Burglary*. Louis IX., by taking off all restriction, made them legal in civil cases. This was not found to work well, and, in 1303, Philip the Fair judged it necessary to confine them, in criminal matters, to state offences, rape, and incendiarism; and in civil cases, to questions of disputed inheritance. Knighthood was allowed to be the best judge of its own honour, and might defend or avenge it as often as occasion arose.

Among the earliest duels upon record, is a very singular one that took place in the reign of Louis II. (A.D. 878). Ingelgerius, Count of Gastinois, was one morning discovered by his Countess dead in bed at her side. Gontran, a relation of the Count, accused the Countess of having murdered her husband, to whom, he asserted, she had long been unfaithful, and challenged her to produce a champion to do battle in her

* "Esprit des Loix," livre xxviii. chap. xxv.

behalf, that he might establish her guilt by killing him.* All the friends and relatives of the Countess believed in her innocence; but Gontran was so stout and bold and renowned a warrior, that no one dared to meet him, for which, as Brantôme quaintly says, "Mauvais et poltrons parens estaient." The unhappy Countess began to despair, when a champion suddenly appeared in the person of Ingelgerius, Count of Anjou, a boy of sixteen years of age, who had been held by the Countess on the baptismal font, and received her husband's name. He tenderly loved his godmother, and offered to do battle in her cause against any and every opponent. The King endeavoured to persuade the generous boy from his enterprise, urging the great strength, tried skill, and invincible courage of the challenger; but he persisted in his resolution, to the great sorrow of all the court, who said it was a cruel thing to permit so brave and beautiful a child to rush to such butchery and death.

When the lists were prepared, the Countess duly acknowledged her champion, and the combatants commenced the onset. Gontran rode so fiercely at his antagonist, and hit him on the shield with such impetuosity, that he lost his own balance and rolled to the ground. The young Count, as Gontran fell, passed his lance through his body, and then dismounting, cut off his head, which, Brantôme says, "he presented to the King, who received it most graciously, and was very joyful, as much so as if any one had made him a present of a city." The innocence of the Countess was then proclaimed with great rejoicings; and she kissed her godson, and wept over his neck with joy, in the presence of all the assembly.

When the Earl of Essex was accused, by Robert de Montfort, before King Henry II., in 1162, of having traitorously suffered the royal standard of England to fall from his hands in a skirmish with the Welsh, at Coleshill, five years previously, the latter offered to prove the truth of the charge by single combat. The Earl of Essex accepted the challenge, and the lists were prepared near Reading. An immense concourse of persons assembled to witness the battle. Essex at first fought stoutly, but, losing his temper and self-command,

* Mémoires de Brantôme touchant les Duels.

he gave an advantage to his opponent, which soon decided the struggle. He was unhorsed, and so severely wounded, that all present thought he was dead. At the solicitation of his relatives, the monks of the Abbey of Reading were allowed to remove the body for interment, and Montfort was declared the victor. Essex, however, was not dead, but stunned only, and, under the care of the monks, recovered in a few weeks from his bodily injuries. The wounds of his mind were not so easily healed. Though a loyal and brave subject, the whole realm believed him a traitor and a coward because he had been vanquished. He could not brook to return to the world deprived of the good opinion of his fellows; he, therefore, made himself a monk, and passed the remainder of his days within the walls of the Abbey.

Du Chastelet relates a singular duel that was proposed in Spain.* A Christian gentleman of Seville sent a challenge to a Moorish cavalier, offering to prove against him, with whatever weapons he might choose, that the religion of Jesus Christ was holy and divine, and that of Mahomet impious and damnable. The Spanish prelates did not choose that Christianity should be compromised within their jurisdiction by the result of any such combat, and they commanded the knight, under pain of excommunication, to withdraw the challenge.

The same author relates, that under Otho I. a question arose among jurisconsults, viz., whether grandchildren, who had lost their father, should share equally with their uncles in the property of their grandfather, at the death of the latter. The difficulty of this question was found so insurmountable, that none of the lawyers of that day could resolve it. It was at last decreed, that it should be decided by single combat. Two champions were accordingly chosen; one for, and the other against, the claims of the little ones. After a long struggle, the champion of the uncles was unhorsed and slain; and it was, therefore, decided, that the right of the grandchildren was established, and that they should enjoy the same portion of their grandfather's possessions that their father would have done had he been alive.

Upon pretexts, just as frivolous as these, duels continued to be fought in most of the countries of Europe during the

* Histoire de Messire Bertrand du Guesclin, livre i. chap. xix.

whole of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. A memorable instance of the slightness of the pretext on which a man could be forced to fight a duel to the death, occurs in the Memoirs of the brave Constable, Du Guesclin. The advantage he had obtained, in a skirmish before Rennes, against William Brembre, an English captain, so preyed on the spirits of William Troussel, the chosen friend and companion of the latter, that nothing would satisfy him but a mortal combat with the Constable. The Duke of Lancaster, to whom Troussel applied for permission to fight the great Frenchman, forbade the battle, as not warranted by the circumstances. Troussel nevertheless burned with a fierce desire to cross his weapon with Du Guesclin, and sought every occasion to pick a quarrel with him. Having so good a will for it, of course he found a way. A relative of his had been taken prisoner by the Constable, in whose hands he remained till he was able to pay his ransom. Troussel resolved to make a quarrel out of this, and despatched a messenger to Du Guesclin, demanding the release of his prisoner, and offering a bond, at a distant date, for the payment of the ransom. Du Guesclin, who had received intimation of the hostile purposes of the Englishman, sent back word, that he would not accept his bond, neither would he release his prisoner, until the full amount of his ransom was paid. As soon as this answer was received, Troussel sent a challenge to the Constable, demanding reparation for the injury he had done his honour, by refusing his bond, and offering a mortal combat, to be fought three strokes with the lance, three with the sword, and three with the dagger. Du Guesclin, although ill in bed with the ague, accepted the challenge, and gave notice to the Marshal d'Andreghem, the King's Lieutenant-General in Lower Normandy, that he might fix the day and the place of combat. The Marshal made all necessary arrangements, upon condition that he who was beaten should pay a hundred florins of gold to feast the nobles and gentlemen who were witnesses of the encounter.

The Duke of Lancaster was very angry with his captain, and told him, that it would be a shame to his knighthood and his nation, if he forced on a combat with the brave Du Guesclin, at a time when he was enfeebled by disease and stretched on the couch of suffering. Upon these representations, Troussel, ashamed of himself, sent notice to Du Guesclin that he

was willing to postpone the duel until such time as he should be perfectly recovered. Du Guesclin replied, that he could not think of postponing the combat, after all the nobility had received notice of it; that he had sufficient strength left, not only to meet, but to conquer such an opponent as he was; and that, if he did not make his appearance in the lists at the time appointed, he would publish him everywhere as a man unworthy to be called a knight, or to wear an honourable sword by his side. Troussel carried this haughty message to the Duke of Lancaster, who immediately gave permission for the battle.

On the day appointed, the two combatants appeared in the lists, in the presence of several thousand spectators. Du Guesclin was attended by the flower of the French nobility, including the Marshal de Beaumanoir, Olivier de Mauny, Bertrand de Saint Pern, and the Viscount de la Bellière, while the Englishman appeared with no more than the customary retinue of two seconds, two squires, two coutilliers, or daggermen, and two trumpeters. The first onset was unfavourable to the Constable: he received so heavy a blow on his shield-arm, that he fell forward to the left, upon his horse's neck, and, being weakened by his fever, was nearly thrown to the ground. All his friends thought he could never recover himself, and began to deplore his ill fortune; but Du Guesclin collected his energies for a decisive effort, and, at the second charge, aimed a blow at the shoulder of his enemy, which felled him to the earth, mortally wounded. He then sprang from his horse, sword in hand, with the intention of cutting off the head of his fallen foe, when the Marshal D'Andreghem threw a golden wand into the arena, as a signal that hostilities should cease. Du Guesclin was proclaimed the victor, amid the joyous acclamations of the crowd, and retiring, left the field to the meaner combatants, who were afterwards to make sport for the people. Four English and as many French squires fought for some time with pointless lances, when the French, gaining the advantage, the sports were declared at an end.

In the time of Charles VI., about the beginning of the fifteenth century, a famous duel was ordered by the Parliament of Paris. The Sieur de Carrouges being absent in the Holy Land, his lady was violated by the Sieur Legris. Car-

rouges, on his return, challenged Legris to mortal combat, for the twofold crime of violation and slander, inasmuch as he had denied his guilt, by asserting that the lady was a willing party. The lady's asseverations of innocence were held to be no evidence by the Parliament, and the duel was commanded with all the ceremonies. "On the day appointed," says Brantôme,* "the lady came to witness the spectacle in her chariot; but the King made her descend, judging her unworthy, because she was criminal in his eyes till her innocence was proved, and caused her to stand upon a scaffold to await the mercy of God and this judgment by the battle. After a short struggle, the Sieur de Carrouges overthrew his enemy, and made him confess both the rape and the slander. He was then taken to the gallows and hanged in the presence of the multitude; while the innocence of the lady was proclaimed by the heralds, and recognised by her husband, the King, and all the spectators."

Numerous battles, of a similar description, constantly took place, until the unfortunate issue of one encounter of the kind led the French king, Henry II., to declare solemnly, that he would never again permit any such encounter, whether it related to a civil or criminal case, or the honour of a gentleman.

This memorable combat was fought in the year 1547. François de Vivonne, Lord of La Chataigneraie, and Guy de Chabot, Lord of Jarnac, had been friends from their early youth, and were noted at the court of Francis I. for the gallantry of their bearing, and the magnificence of their retinue. Chataigneraie, who knew that his friend's means were not very ample, asked him one day, in confidence, how it was that he contrived to be so well provided? Jarnac replied, that his father had married a young and beautiful woman, who, loving the son far better than the sire, supplied him with as much money as he desired. La Chataigneraie betrayed the base secret to the Dauphin, the Dauphin to the King, the King to his courtiers, and the courtiers to all their acquaintance. In a short time it reached the ears of the old Lord de Jarnac, who immediately sent for his son, and demanded to know in what manner the report had originated,

* Mémoires de Brantôme touchant les Duels.

and whether he had been vile enough not only to carry on such a connexion, but to boast of it? De Jarnac indignantly denied that he had ever said so, or given reason to the world to say so, and requested his father to accompany him to court, and confront him with his accuser, that he might see the manner in which he would confound him. They went accordingly, and the younger De Jarnac, entering a room where the Dauphin, La Chataigneraie, and several courtiers were present, exclaimed aloud, "That whoever had asserted that he maintained a criminal connexion with his mother-in-law, was a liar and a coward!" Every eye was turned to the Dauphin and La Chataigneraie, when the latter stood forward and asserted that De Jarnac had himself avowed that such was the fact, and he would extort from his lips another confession of it. A case like this could not be met or rebutted by any legal proof, and the royal council ordered that it should be decided by single combat. The King, however, set his face against the duel,* and forbade them both, under pain of his high displeasure, to proceed any further in the matter. But Francis died in the following year, and the Dauphin, now Henry II., who was himself compromised, resolved that the combat should take place.

The lists were prepared in the court-yard of the chateau of St. Germain-en-Laye, and the 10th of July, 1547, was appointed for the encounter. The cartels of the combatants, which are preserved in the "Mémoires de Castelnau," were as follow:—

"Cartel of François de Vivonne, Lord of La Chataigneraie.

"SIRE:—Having learned that Guy Chabot de Jarnac, being lately at Compeigne, asserted, that whoever had said that he boasted of having criminal intercourse with his mother-in-law was wicked and a wretch,—I, Sire, with your good will and pleasure, do answer, that he has wickedly lied,

* Although Francis showed himself in this case an enemy to duelling, yet, in his own case, he had not the same objection. Every reader of history must remember his answer to the challenge of the Emperor Charles V. The Emperor wrote that he had failed in his word, and that he would sustain their quarrel single-handed against him. Francis replied, that he lied—*qu'il en avait menti par la gorge*, and that he was ready to meet him in single combat whenever and wherever he pleased.

and will lie as many times as he denies having said that which I affirm he did say; for I repeat, that he told me several times, and boasted of it, that he had slept with his step-mother.

"FRANCOIS DE VIVONNE."

To this cartel De Jarnac replied:—

"SIRE:—With your good will and permission, I say, that François de Vivonne has lied in the imputation which he has cast upon me, and of which I spoke to you at Compeigne. I, therefore, entreat you, Sire, most humbly, that you be pleased to grant us a fair field, that we may fight this battle to the death.

"GUY CHABOT."

The preparations were conducted on a scale of the greatest magnificence, the King having intimated his intention of being present. La Chataigneraie made sure of the victory, and invited the King and a hundred and fifty of the principal personages of the court to sup with him in the evening, after the battle, in a splendid tent, which he had prepared at the extremity of the lists. De Jarnac was not so confident, though perhaps more desperate. At noon, on the day appointed, the combatants met, and each took the customary oath, that he bore no charms or amulets about him, or made use of any magic, to aid him against his antagonist. They then attacked each other, sword in hand. La Chataigneraie was a strong, robust man, and over-confident; De Jarnac was nimble, supple, and prepared for the worst. The combat lasted for some time doubtful, until De Jarnac, overpowered by the heavy blows of his opponent, covered his head with his shield, and, stooping down, endeavoured to make amends by his agility for his deficiency of strength. In this crouching posture he aimed two blows at the left thigh of La Chataigneraie, who had left it uncovered, that the motion of his leg might not be impeded. Each blow was successful, and, amid the astonishment of all the spectators, and to the great regret of the King, La Chataigneraie rolled over upon the sand. He seized his dagger, and made a last effort to strike De Jarnac; but he was unable to support himself, and fell

powerless into the arms of the assistants. The officers now interfered, and De Jarnac being declared the victor, fell down upon his knees, uncovered his head, and, clasping his hands together, exclaimed:—"*O Domine, non sum dignus!*" La Chataigneraie was so mortified by the result of the encounter, that he resolutely refused to have his wounds dressed. He tore off the bandages which the surgeons applied, and expired two days afterwards. Ever since that time, any sly and unforeseen attack has been called by the French a *coup de Jarnac*. Henry was so grieved at the loss of his favourite, that he made the solemn oath already alluded to, that he would never again, so long as he lived, permit a duel. Some writers have asserted, and among others, Mezeraie, that he issued a royal edict forbidding them. This has been doubted by others, and, as there appears no registry of the edict in any of the courts, it seems most probable that it was never issued. This opinion is strengthened by the fact that two years afterwards, the council ordered another duel to be fought, with similar forms, but with less magnificence, on account of the inferior rank of the combatants. It is not anywhere stated that Henry interfered to prevent it, notwithstanding his solemn oath; but that, on the contrary, he encouraged it, and appointed the Marshal de la Marque to see that it was conducted according to the rules of chivalry. The disputants were Fendille and D'Aguerre, two gentlemen of the household, who, quarrelling in the King's chamber, had proceeded from words to blows. The council, being informed of the matter, decreed that it could only be decided in the lists. Marshal de la Marque, with the King's permission, appointed the city of Sedan as the place of combat. Fendille, who was a bad swordsman, was anxious to avoid an encounter with D'Aguerre, who was one of the most expert men of the age; but the council authoritatively commanded that he should fight, or be degraded from all his honours. D'Aguerre appeared in the field attended by François de Vendôme, Count de Chartres, while Fendille was accompanied by the Duke de Nevers. Fendille appears to have been not only an inexpert swordsman, but a thorough coward; one who, like Cowley, might have heaped curses on the man,

> ——"(Death's factor sure), who brought
> Dire swords into this peaceful world."

On the very first encounter he was thrown from his horse, and, confessing on the ground all that his victor required of him, slunk away ignominiously from the arena.

One is tempted to look upon the death of Henry II., as a judgment upon him for his perjury in the matter of duelling. In a grand tournament instituted on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter, he broke several lances in encounters with some of the bravest knights of the time. Ambitious of still further renown, he would not rest satisfied until he had also engaged the young Count de Montgomeri. He received a wound in the eye from the lance of this antagonist, and died from its effects shortly afterwards, in the forty-first year of his age.

In the succeeding reigns of Francis II., Charles IX., and Henry III., the practice of duelling increased to an alarming extent. Duels were not rare in the other countries of Europe at the same period; but in France they were so frequent, that historians, in speaking of that age, designate it as "l'époque de la fureur des duels." The Parliament of Paris endeavoured, as far as in its power lay, to discourage the practice. By a decree dated the 26th of June, 1559, it declared all persons who should be present at duels, or aiding and abetting in them, to be rebels to the King, transgressors of the law, and disturbers of the public peace.

When Henry III. was assassinated at St. Cloud, in 1589, a young gentleman, named L'isle Marivaut, who had been much beloved by him, took his death so much to heart, that he resolved not to survive him. Not thinking suicide an honourable death, and wishing, as he said, to die gloriously in revenging his King and master, he publicly expressed his readiness to fight anybody to the death who should assert that Henry's assassination was not a great misfortune to the community. Another youth, of a fiery temper and tried courage, named Marolles, took him at his word, and the day and place of the combat were forthwith appointed. When the hour had come, and all were ready, Marolles turned to his second, and asked whether his opponent had a casque or helmet only, or whether he wore a *sallade*, or headpiece. Being answered a helmet only, he said gaily, "So much the better; for, sir, my second, you shall repute me the wickedest man in all the world, if I do not thrust my lance right through the middle

of his head and kill him." Truth to say, he did so at the very first onset, and the unhappy L'isle Marivaut expired without a groan. Brantôme, who relates this story, adds, that the victor might have done as he pleased with the body, cut off the head, dragged it out of the camp, or exposed it upon an ass, but that, being a wise and very courteous gentleman, he left it to the relatives of the deceased to be honourably buried, contenting himself with the glory of his triumph, by which he gained no little renown and honour among the ladies of Paris.

On the accession of Henry IV., that monarch pretended to set his face against duelling; but such was the influence of early education and the prejudices of society upon him, that he never could find it in his heart to punish a man for this offence. He thought it tended to foster a warlike spirit among his people. When the chivalrous Crequi demanded his permission to fight Don Philippe de Savoire, he is reported to have said, "Go, and if I were not a King, I would be your second." It is no wonder that when such were known to be the King's disposition, his edicts attracted but small attention. A calculation was made by M. de Lomenie, in the year 1607, that since the accession of Henry, in 1589, no less than four thousand French gentlemen had lost their lives in these conflicts, which, for the eighteen years, would have been at the rate of four or five in a week, or eighteen per month! Sully, who reports this fact in his Memoirs, does not throw the slightest doubt upon its exactness, and adds, that it was chiefly owing to the facility and ill-advised good-nature of his royal master that the bad example had so empoisoned the court, the city, and the whole country. This wise minister devoted much of his time and attention to the subject; for the rage, he says, was such as to cause him a thousand pangs, and the King also. There was hardly a man moving in what was called good society, who had not been engaged in a duel either as principal or second; and if there were such a man, his chief desire was to free himself from the imputation of non-duelling, by picking a quarrel with somebody. Sully constantly wrote letters to the King, in which he prayed him to renew the edicts against this barbarous custom, to aggravate the punishment against offenders, and never, in any instance, to grant a pardon, even to a person who had wounded

another in a duel, much less to any one who had taken away life. He also advised, that some sort of tribunal, or court of honour, should be established, to take cognizance of injurious and slanderous language, and of all such matters as usually led to duels; and that the justice to be administered by this court should be sufficiently prompt and severe to appease the complainant, and make the offender repent of his aggression.

Henry, being so warmly pressed by his friend and minister, called together an extraordinary council in the gallery of the palace of Fontainebleau, to take the matter into consideration. When all the members were assembled, his Majesty requested that some person conversant with the subject would make a report to him on the origin, progress, and different forms of the duel. Sully complacently remarks, that none of the counsellors gave the King any great reason to felicitate them on their erudition. In fact, they all remained silent. Sully held his peace with the rest; but he looked so knowing, that the King turned towards him, and said:—"Great master! by your face I conjecture that you know more of this matter than you would have us believe. I pray you, and indeed I command, that you tell us what you think and what you know." The coy minister refused, as he says, out of mere politeness to his more ignorant colleagues; but, being again pressed by the King, he entered into a history of duelling both in ancient and modern times. He has not preserved this history in his Memoirs; and, as none of the ministers or counsellors present thought proper to do so, the world is deprived of a discourse which was, no doubt, a learned and remarkable one. The result was, that a royal edict was issued, which Sully lost no time in transmitting to the most distant provinces, with a distinct notification to all parties concerned that the King was in earnest, and would exert the full rigour of the law in punishment of the offenders. Sully himself does not inform us what were the provisions of the new law; but Father Matthias has been more explicit, and from him we learn, that the Marshals of France were created judges of a court of chivalry, for the hearing of all causes wherein the honour of a noble or gentleman was concerned, and that such as resorted to duelling should be punished by death and confiscation of property, and that the

seconds and assistants should lose their rank, dignity, or offices, and be banished from the court of their sovereign.*

But so strong a hold had the education and prejudice of his age upon the mind of the King, that though his reason condemned, his sympathies approved the duel. Notwithstanding this threatened severity, the number of duels did not diminish, and the wise Sully had still to lament the prevalence of an evil which menaced society with utter disorganization. In the succeeding reign the practice prevailed, if possible, to a still greater extent, until the Cardinal de Richelieu, better able to grapple with it than Sully had been, made some severe examples in the very highest classes. Lord Herbert, the English ambassador at the court of Louis XIII., repeats, in his letters, an observation that had been previously made in the reign of Henry IV., that it was rare to find a Frenchman moving in good society who had not killed his man in a duel. The Abbé Millot says of this period, that the duel madness made the most terrible ravages. Men had actually a frenzy for combatting. Caprice and vanity, as well as the excitement of passion, imposed the necessity of fighting. Friends were obliged to enter into the quarrels of their friends, or be themselves called out for their refusal, and revenge became hereditary in many families. It was reckoned that in twenty years eight thousand letters of pardon had been issued to persons who had killed others in single combat.†

Other writers confirm this statement. Amelot de Houssaye, in his Memoirs, says, upon this subject, that duels were so common in the first years of the reign of Louis XIII., that the ordinary conversation of persons when they met in the morning was, "*Do you know who fought yesterday?*" and after dinner, "*Do you know who fought this morning?*" The most infamous duellist at that period was De Bouteville. It was not at all necessary to quarrel with this assassin to be forced to fight a duel with him. When he heard that any one was very brave, he would go to him, and say, "*People tell me that you are brave; you and I must fight together!*" Every morning the most notorious bravos and duellists used to assemble at his house, to take a breakfast of bread and

* Le Père Matthias, tome ii. livre iv.

† "Elemens de l'Histoire de France," vol. iii. p. 219.

wine, and practise fencing. M. de Valençay, who was afterwards elevated to the rank of a cardinal, ranked very high in the estimation of De Bouteville and his gang. Hardly a day passed but what he was engaged in some duel or other, either as principal or second; and he once challenged De Bouteville himself, his best friend, because De Bouteville had fought a duel without inviting him to become his second. This quarrel was only appeased on the promise of De Bouteville that, in his next encounter, he would not fail to avail himself of his services. For that purpose he went out the same day, and picked a quarrel with the Marquis des Portes. M. de Valençay, according to agreement, had the pleasure of serving as his second, and of running through the body, M. de Cavois, the second of the Marquis des Portes, a man who had never done him any injury, and whom he afterwards acknowledged he had never seen before.

Cardinal Richelieu devoted much attention to this lamentable state of public morals, and seems to have concurred with his great predecessor, Sully, that nothing but the most rigorous severity could put a stop to the evil. The subject indeed was painfully forced upon him by his enemies. The Marquis de Themines, to whom Richelieu, then Bishop of Luçon, had given offence by some representations he had made to Mary of Medicis, determined, since he could not challenge an ecclesiastic, to challenge his brother. An opportunity was soon found. Themines, accosting the Marquis de Richelieu, complained, in an insulting tone, that the Bishop of Luçon had broken his faith. The Marquis resented both the manner and matter of his speech, and readily accepted a challenge. They met in the Rue d'Angoulême, and the unfortunate Richelieu was stabbed to the heart, and instantly expired. From that moment the Bishop became the steady foe of the practice of duelling. Reason and the impulse of brotherly love alike combined to make him detest it, and when his power in France was firmly established, he set vigorously about repressing it. In his "Testament Politique," he has collected his thoughts upon the subject, in the chapter entitled "Des moyens d'arrêter les Duels." In spite of the edicts that he published, the members of the nobility persisted in fighting upon the most trivial and absurd pretences. At

last Richelieu made a terrible example. The infamous De Bouteville challenged and fought the Marquis de Beuoron; and, although the duel itself was not fatal to either, its consequences were fatal to both. High as they were, Richelieu resolved that the law should reach them, and they were both tried, found guilty, and beheaded. Thus did society get rid of one of the most bloodthirsty scoundrels that ever polluted it.

In 1632 two noblemen fought a duel, in which they were both killed. The officers of justice had notice of the breach of the law, and arrived at the scene of combat before the friends of the parties had time to remove the bodies. In conformity with the Cardinal's severe code upon the subject, the bodies were ignominiously stripped, and hanged upon a gallows, with their heads downwards, for several hours, within sight of all the people.* This severity sobered the frenzy of the nation for a time; but it was soon forgotten. Men's minds were too deeply imbued with a false notion of honour to be brought to a right way of thinking: by such examples, however striking, Richelieu was unable to persuade them to walk in the right path, though he could punish them for choosing the wrong one. He had, with all his acuteness, miscalculated the spirit of duelling. It was not death that a duellist feared: it was shame, and the contempt of his fellows. As Addison remarked more than eighty years afterwards, "Death was not sufficient to deter men who made it their glory to despise it; but if every one who fought a duel were to stand in the pillory, it would quickly diminish the number of those imaginary men of honour, and put an end to so absurd a practice." Richelieu never thought of this.

Sully says, that in his time the Germans were also much addicted to duelling. There were three places where it was legal to fight; Witzburg, in Franconia, and Uspach and Halle, in Swabia. Thither, of course, vast numbers repaired, and murdered each other under sanction of the law. At an earlier period, in Germany, it was held highly disgraceful to refuse to fight. Any one who surrendered to his adversary for a simple wound that did not disable him, was reputed infamous, and could neither cut his beard, bear arms, mount on horse-

* Mercure de France, vol. xiii.

back, nor hold any office in the state. He who fell in a duel was buried with great pomp and splendour.

In the year 1652, just after Louis XIV. had attained his majority, a desperate duel was fought between the Dukes de Beaufort and De Nemours, each attended by four gentlemen. Although brothers-in-law, they had long been enemies, and their constant dissensions had introduced much disorganization among the troops which they severally commanded. Each had long sought an opportunity for combat, which at last arose on a misunderstanding relative to the places they were to occupy at the council board. They fought with pistols, and, at the first discharge, the Duke de Nemours was shot through the body, and almost instantly expired. Upon this the Marquis de Villars, who seconded Nemours, challenged Hericourt, the second of the Duke de Beaufort, a man whom he had never before seen; and the challenge being accepted, they fought even more desperately than their principals. This combat, being with swords, lasted longer than the first, and was more exciting to the six remaining gentlemen who stayed to witness it. The result was fatal to Hericourt, who fell pierced to the heart by the sword of De Villars. Anything more savage than this can hardly be imagined. Voltaire says such duels were frequent, and the compiler of the "Dictionnaire d'Anecdotes" informs us, that the number of seconds was not fixed. As many as ten, or twelve, or twenty, were not unfrequent, and they often fought together after their principals were disabled. The highest mark of friendship one man could manifest towards another, was to choose him for his second; and many gentlemen were so desirous of serving in this capacity, that they endeavoured to raise every slight misunderstanding into a quarrel, that they might have the pleasure of being engaged in it. The Count de Bussy Rabutin relates an instance of this in his Memoirs. He says, that as he was one evening coming out of the theatre, a gentleman, named Bruc, whom he had not before known, stopped him very politely, and, drawing him aside, asked him if it was true that the Count de Thianges had called him (Bruc) a drunkard? Bussy replied, that he really did not know, for he saw the Count very seldom. "Oh! he is your uncle!" replied Bruc; "and, as I cannot have satisfaction from him, because he lives so far off in the country, I apply

to you." "I see what you are at," replied Bussy, "and, since you wish to put me in my uncle's place, I answer, that whoever asserted that he called you a drunkard, told a lie!" "My brother said so," replied Bruc, "and he is a child." "Horsewhip him, then, for his falsehood," returned De Bussy. "I will not have my brother called a liar," returned Bruc, determined to quarrel with him; "so draw, and defend yourself!" They both drew their swords in the public street, but were separated by the spectators. They agreed, however, to fight on a future occasion, and with all the regular forms of the duello. A few days afterwards, a gentleman, whom De Bussy had never before seen, and whom he did not know, even by name, called upon him, and asked if he might have the privilege of serving as his second. He added, that he neither knew him nor Bruc, except by reputation, but, having made up his mind to be second to one of them, he had decided upon accompanying De Bussy as the braver man of the two. De Bussy thanked him very sincerely for his politeness, but begged to be excused, as he had already engaged four seconds to accompany him, and he was afraid that if he took any more, the affair would become a battle instead of a duel.

When such quarrels as these were looked upon as mere matters of course, the state of society must have been indeed awful. Louis XIV. very early saw the evil, and as early determined to remedy it. It was not, however, till the year 1679, when he instituted the "Chambre Ardente," for the trial of the slow poisoners and pretenders to sorcery, that he published any edict against duelling. In that year his famous edict was promulgated, in which he reiterated and confirmed the severe enactments of his predecessors, Henry IV. and Louis XIII., and expressed his determination never to pardon any offender. By this celebrated ordinance a supreme court of honour was established, composed of the Marshals of France. They were bound, on taking the office, to give to every one who brought a well-founded complaint before them, such reparation as would satisfy the justice of the case. Should any gentleman against whom complaint was made refuse to obey the mandate of the court of honour, he might be punished by fine and imprisonment; and when that was not possible, by reason of his absenting himself from the kingdom, his estates might be confiscated till his return.

Every man who sent a challenge, be the cause of offence what it might, was deprived of all redress from the court of honour—suspended three years from the exercise of any office in the state—was further imprisoned for two years, and sentenced to pay a fine of half his yearly income.

He who accepted a challenge, was subject to the same punishment. Any servant, or other person, who knowingly became the bearer of a challenge, was, if found guilty, sentenced to stand in the pillory and be publicly whipped for the first offence, and for the second, sent for three years to the galleys.

Any person who actually fought, was to be held guilty of murder, even though death did not ensue, and was to be punished accordingly. Persons in the higher ranks of life were to be beheaded, and those of the middle class hanged upon a gallows, and their bodies refused Christian burial.

At the same time that Louis published this severe edict, he exacted a promise from his principal nobility that they would never engage in a duel on any pretence whatever. He never swerved from his resolution to pursue all duellists with the utmost rigour, and many were executed in various parts of the country. A slight abatement of the evil was the consequence, and in the course of a few years one duel was not fought where twelve had been fought previously. A medal was struck to commemorate the circumstance, by the express command of the King. So much had he this object at heart, that, in his will, he particularly recommended to his successor the care of his edict against duelling, and warned him against any ill-judged lenity to those who disobeyed it.

A singular law formerly existed in Malta with regard to duelling. By this law it was permitted, but only upon condition that the parties should fight in one particular street. If they presumed to settle their quarrel elsewhere, they were held guilty of murder, and punished accordingly. What was also very singular, they were bound, under heavy penalties, to put up their swords when requested to do so by a priest, a knight, or a woman. It does not appear, however, that the ladies or the knights exercised this mild and beneficent privilege to any great extent; the former were too often themselves the cause of duels, and the latter sympathized too much in the wounded honour of the combatants to

attempt to separate them. The priests alone were the great peacemakers. Brydone says, that a cross was always painted on the wall opposite to the spot where a knight had been killed, and that in the "street of duels" he counted about twenty of them.*

In England the private duel was also practised to a scandalous extent, towards the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries. The judicial combat now began to be more rare, but several instances of it are mentioned in history. One was instituted in the reign of Elizabeth, and another so late as the time of Charles I. Sir Henry Spelman gives an account of that which took place in Elizabeth's reign, which is curious, perhaps the more so when we consider that it was perfectly legal, and that similar combats remained so till the year 1819. A proceeding having been instituted in the Court of Common Pleas for the recovery of certain manorial rights in the county of Kent, the defendant offered to prove by single combat his right to retain possession. The plaintiff accepted the challenge, and the Court having no power to stay the proceedings, agreed to the champions who were to fight in lieu of the principals. The Queen commanded the parties to compromise; but it being represented to Her Majesty that they were justified by law in the course they were pursuing, she allowed them to proceed. On the day appointed, the Justices of the Common Pleas, and all the counsel engaged in the cause, appeared as umpires of the combat, at a place in Tothill Fields, where the lists had been prepared. The champions were ready for the encounter, and the plantiff and defendant were publicly called to come forward and acknowledge them. The defendant answered to his name, and recognised his champion with the due formalities, but the plaintiff did not appear. Without his presence and authority the combat could not take place; and his absence being considered as an abandonment of his claim, he was declared to be nonsuited, and barred for ever from renewing his suit before any other tribunal whatever.

The Queen appears to have disapproved personally of this mode of settling a disputed claim, but her judges and legal

* Brydone's "Tour in Malta," 1772.

advisers made no attempt to alter the barbarous law. The practice of private duelling excited more indignation, from its being of every-day occurrence. In the time of James I. the English were so infected with the French madness, that Bacon, when he was Attorney-General, lent the aid of his powerful eloquence to effect a reformation of the evil. Informations were exhibited in the Star Chamber against two persons named Priest and Wright, for being engaged, as principal and second, in a duel, on which occasion he delivered a charge that was so highly approved of by the Lords of the Council, that they ordered it to be printed and circulated over the country, as a thing "very meet and worthy to be remembered and made known unto the world." He began by considering the nature and greatness of the mischief of duelling. "It troubleth peace—it disfurnisheth war—it bringeth calamity upon private men, peril upon the state, and contempt upon the law. Touching the causes of it," he observed, "that the first motive of it, no doubt, is a false and erroneous imagination of honour and credit; but then, the seed of this mischief being such, it is nourished by vain discourses and green and unripe conceits. Hereunto may be added, that men have almost lost the true notion and understanding of fortitude and valour. For fortitude distinguisheth of the grounds of quarrel whether they be just; and not only so, but whether they be worthy, and setteth a better price upon men's lives than to bestow them idly. Nay, it is weakness and disesteem of a man's self to put a man's life upon such liedger performances. A man's life is not to be trifled with: it is to be offered up and sacrificed to honourable services, public merits, good causes, and noble adventures. It is in expense of blood as it is in expense of money. It is no liberality to make a profusion of money upon every vain occasion, neither is it fortitude to make effusion of blood, except the cause of it be worth."*

The most remarkable event connected with duelling in this reign was that between Lord Sanquir, a Scotch nobleman, and one Turner, a fencing-master. In a trial of skill between them, his lordship's eye was accidentally thrust out by the

* See "Life and Character of Lord Bacon," by Thomas Martin, Barrister-at-law.

point of Turner's sword. Turner expressed great regret at the circumstance, and Lord Sanquir bore his loss with as much philosophy as he was master of, and forgave his antagonist. Three years afterwards, Lord Sanquir was at Paris, where he was a constant visiter at the court of Henry IV. One day, in the course of conversation, the affable monarch inquired how he had lost his eye. Sanquir, who prided himself on being the most expert swordsman of the age, blushed as he replied that it was inflicted by the sword of a fencing-master. Henry, forgetting his assumed character of an anti-duellist, carelessly, and as a mere matter of course, inquired whether the man lived? Nothing more was said, but the query sank deep into the proud heart of the Scotch baron, who returned shortly afterwards to England, burning for revenge. His first intent was to challenge the fencing-master to single combat, but, on further consideration, he deemed it inconsistent with his dignity to meet him as an equal in fair and open fight. He therefore hired two bravos, who set upon the fencing-master, and murdered him in his own house at Whitefriars. The assassins were taken and executed, and a reward of one thousand pounds offered for the apprehension of their employer. Lord Sanquir concealed himself for several days, and then surrendered to take his trial, in the hope (happily false) that Justice would belie her name, and be lenient to a murderer because he was a nobleman, who, on a false point of honour, had thought fit to take revenge into his own hands. The most powerful intercessions were employed in his favour, but James, to his credit, was deaf to them all. Bacon, in his character of Attorney-General, prosecuted the prisoner to conviction; and he died the felon's death, on the 29th of June, 1612, on a gibbet erected in front of the gate of Westminster Hall.

With regard to the public duel, or trial by battle, demanded under the sanction of the law, to terminate a quarrel which the ordinary course of justice could with difficulty decide, Bacon was equally opposed to it, and thought that in no case should it be granted. He suggested that there should be declared a constant and settled resolution in the state to abolish it altogether; that care should be taken that the evil be no more cockered, nor the humour of it fed, but that all persons found guilty should be rigorously punished by the

Star Chamber, and those of eminent quality banished from the court.

In the succeeding reign, when Donald Mackay, the first Lord Reay, accused David Ramsay of treason, in being concerned with the Marquis of Hamilton in a design upon the crown of Scotland, he was challenged by the latter to make good his assertion by single combat.* It had been at first the intention of the government to try the case by the common law, but Ramsay thought he would stand a better chance of escape by recurring to the old and almost exploded custom, but which was still the right of every man in appeals of treason. Lord Reay readily accepted the challenge, and both were confined in the Tower until they found security that they would appear on a certain day appointed by the court to determine the question. The management of the affair was delegated to the Marischal Court of Westminster, and the Earl of Lindsay was created Lord Constable of England for the purpose. Shortly before the day appointed, Ramsay confessed in substance all that Lord Reay had laid to his charge, upon which Charles I. put a stop to the proceedings.

But in England, about this period, sterner disputes arose among men than those mere individual matters which generate duels. The men of the Commonwealth encouraged no practice of the kind, and the subdued aristocracy carried their habits and prejudices elsewhere, and fought their duels at foreign courts. Cromwell's Parliament, however,—although the evil at that time was not so crying,—published an order, in 1654, for the prevention of duels, and the punishment of all concerned in them. Charles II., on his restoration, also issued a proclamation upon the subject. In his reign an infamous duel was fought—infamous, not only from its own circumstances, but from the lenity that was shown to the principal offenders.

The worthless Duke of Buckingham, having debauched the Countess of Shrewsbury, was challenged by her husband to mortal combat, in January 1668. Charles II. endeavoured to prevent the duel, not from any regard to public morality, but from fear for the life of his favourite. He gave commands to the Duke of Albemarle to confine Buckingham to

* See "History of the House and Clan of Mackay."

his house, or take some other measures to prevent him from fighting. Albemarle neglected the order, thinking that the King himself might prevent the combat by some surer means. The meeting took place at Barn Elms, the injured Shrewsbury being attended by Sir John Talbot, his relative, and Lord Bernard Howard, son of the Earl of Arundel. Buckingham was accompanied by two of his dependants, Captain Holmes and Sir John Jenkins. According to the barbarous custom of the age, not only the principals, but the seconds, engaged each other. Jenkins was pierced to the heart, and left dead upon the field, and Sir John Talbot severely wounded in both arms. Buckingham himself escaping with slight wounds, ran his unfortunate antagonist through the body, and then left the field with the wretched woman, the cause of all the mischief, who, in the dress of a page, awaited the issue of the conflict in a neighbouring wood, holding her paramour's horse to avoid suspicion. Great influence was exerted to save the guilty parties from punishment, and the master, as base as the favourite, made little difficulty in granting a free pardon to all concerned. In a royal proclamation issued shortly afterwards, Charles II. formally pardoned the murderers, but declared his intention never to extend, in future, any mercy to such offenders. It would be hard after this to say who was the most infamous, the King, the favourite, or the courtesan.

In the reign of Queen Anne, repeated complaints were made of the prevalence of duelling. Addison, Swift, Steele, and other writers, employed their powerful pens in reprobation of it. Steele especially, in the "Tatler" and "Guardian," exposed its impiety and absurdity, and endeavoured, both by argument and by ridicule, to bring his countrymen to a right way of thinking.* His comedy of "The Conscious Lover" contains an admirable exposure of the abuse of the word *honour*, which led men into an error so lamentable. Swift, writing upon the subject, remarked that he could see no harm in rogues and fools shooting each other. Addison and Steele took higher ground, and the latter, in the "Guardian," summed up nearly all that could be said upon the sub-

* See "Spectator," Nos. 84, 97, and 99; and "Tatler," Nos. 25, 26, 29, 31, 38, and 39; and "Guardian," No. 20.

ject in the following impressive words:—"A Christian and a gentleman are made inconsistent appellations of the same person. You are not to expect eternal life if you do not forgive injuries, and your mortal life is rendered uncomfortable if you are not ready to commit a murder in resentment of an affront; for good sense, as well as religion, is so utterly banished the world that men glory in their very passions, and pursue trifles with the utmost vengeance, so little do they know that to forgive is the most arduous pitch human nature can arrive at. A coward has often fought—a coward has often conquered, but a coward never forgave." Steele also published a pamphlet, in which he gave a detailed account of the edict of Louis XIV., and the measures taken by that monarch to cure his subjects of their murderous folly.

On the 8th of May, 1711, Sir Cholmely Deering, M. P. for the county of Kent, was slain in a duel by Mr. Richard Thornhill, also a member of the House of Commons. Three days afterwards, Sir Peter King brought the subject under the notice of the Legislature, and after dwelling at considerable length on the alarming increase of the practice, obtained leave to bring in a bill for the prevention and punishment of duelling. It was read a first time that day, and ordered for a second reading in the ensuing week.

About the same time the attention of the Upper House of Parliament was also drawn to the subject in the most painful manner. Two of its most noted members would have fought, had it not been that Queen Anne received notice of their intention, and exacted a pledge that they would desist; while a few months afterwards, two other of its members lost their lives in one of the most remarkable duels upon record. The first affair, which happily terminated without a meeting, was between the Duke of Marlborough and the Earl Pawlet. The latter, and fatal encounter, was between the Duke of Hamilton and Lord Mohun.

The first arose out of a debate in the Lords upon the conduct of the Duke of Ormond, in refusing to hazard a general engagement with the enemy, in which Earl Pawlet remarked that nobody could doubt the courage of the Duke of Ormond. "He was not like a certain general, who led troops to the slaughter, to cause great numbers of officers to be knocked on the head in a battle, or against stone walls, in order to fill his

pockets by disposing of their commissions." Every one felt that the remark was aimed at the Duke of Marlborough, but he remained silent, though evidently suffering in mind. Soon after the House broke up, the Earl Pawlet received a visit from Lord Mohun, who told him that the Duke of Marlborough was anxious to come to an explanation with him relative to some expressions he had made use of in that day's debate, and therefore prayed him to "go and take a little air in the country." Earl Pawlet did not affect to misunderstand the hint, but asked him in plain terms whether he brought a challenge from the Duke. Lord Mohun said his message needed no explanation, and that he (Lord Mohun) would accompany the Duke of Marlborough. He then took his leave, and Earl Pawlet returned home and told his lady that he was going out to fight a duel with the Duke of Marlborough. His lady, alarmed for her lord's safety, gave notice of his intention to the Earl of Dartmouth, who immediately, in the Queen's name, sent to the Duke of Marlborough, and commanded him not to stir abroad. He also caused Earl Pawlet's house to be guarded by two sentinels; and having taken these precautions, informed the Queen of the whole affair. Her Majesty sent at once for the Duke, expressed her abhorrence of the custom of duelling, and required his word of honour that he would proceed no further. The Duke pledged his word accordingly, and the affair terminated.

The lamentable duel between the Duke of Hamilton and Lord Mohun took place in November, 1712, and sprang from the following circumstances. A lawsuit had been pending for eleven years between these two noblemen, and they looked upon each other in consequence with a certain degree of coldness. They met together on the 13th of November in the chambers of Mr. Orlebar, a Master in Chancery, when, in the course of conversation, the Duke of Hamilton reflected upon the conduct of one of the witnesses in the cause, saying that he was a person who had neither truth nor justice in him. Lord Mohun, somewhat nettled at this remark, applied to a witness favourable to his side, made answer hastily, that Mr. Whiteworth, the person alluded to, had quite as much truth and justice in him as the Duke of Hamilton. The Duke made no reply, and no one present imagined that he took offence at what was said; and when he went out of the room,

he made a low and courteous salute to the Lord Mohun. In the evening, General Macartney called twice upon the Duke with a challenge from Lord Mohun, and failing in seeing him, sought him a third time at a tavern, where he found him, and delivered his message. The Duke accepted the challenge, and the day after the morrow, which was Sunday, the 15th of November, at seven in the morning, was appointed for the meeting.

At that hour they assembled in Hyde Park, the Duke being attended by his relative, Colonel Hamilton, and the Lord Mohun by General Macartney. They jumped over a ditch into a place called the Nursery, and prepared for the combat. The Duke of Hamilton, turning to General Macartney, said, "*Sir, you are the cause of this, let the event be what it will.*" Lord Mohun did not wish that the seconds should engage, but the Duke insisted that "*Macartney should have a share in the dance.*" All being ready, the two principals took up their positions, and fought with swords so desperately that, after a short time, they both fell down, mortally wounded. The Lord Mohun expired upon the spot, and the Duke of Hamilton in the arms of his servants as they were carrying him to his coach.

This unhappy termination caused the greatest excitement, not only in the metropolis, but all over the country. The Tories, grieved at the loss of the Duke of Hamilton, charged the fatal combat on the Whig party, whose leader, the Duke of Marlborough, had so recently set the example of political duels. They called Lord Mohun the bully of the Whig faction (he had already killed three men in duels, and been twice tried for murder), and asserted openly, that the quarrel was concocted between him and General Macartney to rob the country of the services of the Duke of Hamilton by murdering him. It was also asserted, that the wound of which the Duke died was not inflicted by Lord Mohun, but by Macartney; and every means was used to propagate this belief. Colonel Hamilton, against whom and Macartney the coroner's jury had returned a verdict of wilful murder, surrendered a few days afterwards, and was examined before a privy council sitting at the house of Lord Dartmouth. He then deposed, that seeing Lord Mohun fall, and the Duke upon him, he ran to the Duke's assistance, and that he might with the more

ease help him, he flung down both their swords, and, as he was raising the Duke up, *he saw Macartney make a push at him.* Upon this deposition a royal proclamation was immediately issued, offering a reward of 500*l.* for the apprehension of Macartney, to which the Duchess of Hamilton afterwards added a reward of 300*l.*

Upon the further examination of Colonel Hamilton, it was found that reliance could not be placed on all his statements, and that he contradicted himself in several important particulars. He was arraigned at the Old Bailey for the murder of Lord Mohun, the whole political circles of London being in a fever of excitement for the result. All the Tory party prayed for his acquittal, and a Tory mob surrounded the doors and all the avenues leading to the court of justice for many hours before the trial began. The examination of witnesses lasted seven hours. The criminal still persisted in accusing General Macartney of the murder of the Duke of Hamilton, but, in other respects, prevaricated foully. He was found guilty of manslaughter. This favourable verdict was received with universal applause, "not only from the court and all the gentlemen present, but the common people showed a mighty satisfaction, which they testified by loud and repeated huzzas."*

As the popular delirium subsided, and men began to reason coolly upon the subject, they disbelieved the assertions of Colonel Hamilton, that Macartney had stabbed the Duke, although it was universally admitted that he had been much too busy and presuming. Hamilton was shunned by all his former companions, and his life rendered so irksome to him, that he sold out of the Guards, and retired to private life, in which he died heart-broken four years afterwards.

General Macartney surrendered about the same time, and was tried for murder in the Court of King's Bench. He was, however, found guilty of manslaughter only.

At the opening of the session of Parliament of 1713, the Queen made pointed allusion in her speech to the frequency of duelling, and recommended to the Legislature to devise some speedy and effectual remedy for it. A bill to that effect was brought forward, but thrown out on the second reading,

* "Post Boy," December 13th, 1712.

to the very great regret of all the sensible portion of the community.

A famous duel was fought in 1765, between Lord Byron and Mr. Chaworth. The dispute arose at a club dinner, and was relative to which of the two had the largest quantity of game on his estates. Infuriated by wine and passion, they retired instantly into an adjoining room, and fought with swords across a table, by the feeble glimmer of a tallow candle. Mr. Chaworth, who was the more expert swordsman of the two, received a mortal wound, and shortly afterwards expired. Lord Byron was brought to trial for the murder before the House of Lords; and it appearing clearly, that the duel was not premeditated, but fought at once, and in the heat of passion, he was found guilty of manslaughter only, and ordered to be discharged upon payment of his fees. This was a very bad example for the country, and duelling of course fell into no disrepute after such a verdict.

In France, more severity was exercised. In the year 1769, the Parliament of Grenoble took cognizance of the delinquency of the Sieur Duchelas, one of its members, who challenged and killed in a duel a captain of the Flemish legion. The servant of Duchelas officiated as second, and was arraigned with his master for the murder of the captain. They were both found guilty. Duchelas was broken alive on the wheel, and the servant condemned to the galleys for life.

A barbarous and fiercely-contested duel was fought in November 1778, between two foreign adventurers, at Bath, named Count Rice and the Vicomte du Barri. Some dispute arose relative to a gambling transaction, in the course of which Du Barri contradicted an assertion of the other, by saying, "That is not true!" Count Rice immediately asked him if he knew the very disagreeable meaning of the words he had employed. Du Barri said he was perfectly well aware of their meaning, and that Rice might interpret them just as he pleased. A challenge was immediately given and accepted. Seconds were sent for, who, arriving with but little delay, the whole party, though it was not long after midnight, proceeded to a place called Claverton Down, where they remained with a surgeon until daylight. They then prepared for the encounter, each being armed with two pistols and a sword.

The ground having been marked out by the seconds, Du Barri fired first, and wounded his opponent in the thigh. Count Rice then levelled his pistol, and shot Du Barri mortally in the breast. So angry were the combatants, that they refused to desist; both stepped back a few paces, and then rushing forward, discharged their second pistols at each other. Neither shot took effect, and both throwing away their pistols, prepared to finish the sanguinary struggle by the sword. They took their places, and were advancing towards each other, when the Vicomte du Barri suddenly staggered, grew pale, and falling to the ground, exclaimed, "*Je vous demande ma vie.*" His opponent had but just time to answer, that he granted it, when the unfortunate Du Barri turned upon the grass, and expired with a heavy groan. The survivor of this savage conflict was then removed to his lodgings, where he lay for some weeks in a dangerous state. The coroner's jury, in the mean while, sat upon the body of Du Barri, and disgraced themselves by returning a verdict of manslaughter only. Count Rice, upon his recovery, was indicted for the murder notwithstanding this verdict. On his trial he entered into a long defence of his conduct, pleading the fairness of the duel, and its unpremeditated nature; and, at the same time, expressing his deep regret for the unfortunate death of Du Barri, with whom for many years he had been bound in ties of the strictest friendship. These considerations appear to have weighed with the jury, and this fierce duellist was again found guilty of manslaughter only, and escaped with a merely nominal punishment.

A duel, less remarkable from its circumstances, but more so from the rank of the parties, took place in 1789. The combatants on this occasion were the Duke of York and Colonel Lenox, the nephew and heir of the Duke of Richmond. The cause of offence was given by the Duke of York, who had said, in presence of several officers of the Guards, that words had been used to Colonel Lenox at Daubigny's to which no gentleman ought to have submitted. Colonel Lenox went up to the Duke on parade, and asked him publicly whether he had made such an assertion. The Duke of York, without answering his question, coldly ordered him to his post. When parade was over, he took an opportunity of saying publicly in the orderly room before Colonel Lenox,

that he desired no protection from his rank as a prince and his station as commanding officer; adding that, when he was off duty, he wore a plain brown coat like a private gentleman, and was ready as such to give satisfaction. Colonel Lenox desired nothing better than satisfaction; that is to say, to run the chance of shooting the Duke through the body, or being himself shot. He accordingly challenged his Royal Highness, and they met on Wimbledon Common. Colonel Lenox fired first, and the ball whizzed past the head of his opponent, so near to it as to graze his projecting curl. The Duke refused to return the fire, and the seconds interfering, the affair terminated.

Colonel Lenox was very shortly afterwards engaged in another duel arising out of this. A Mr. Swift wrote a pamphlet in reference to the dispute between him and the Duke of York, at some expressions in which he took so much offence, as to imagine that nothing but a shot at the writer could atone for them. They met on the Uxbridge Road, but no damage was done to either party.

The Irish were for a long time renowned for their love of duelling. The slightest offence which it is possible to imagine that one man could offer to another, was sufficient to provoke a challenge. Sir Jonah Barrington relates, in his Memoirs, that previous to the Union, during the time of a disputed election in Dublin, it was no unusual thing for three-and-twenty duels to be fought in a day. Even in times of less excitement, they were so common as to be deemed unworthy of note by the regular chroniclers of events, except in cases where one or both of the combatants were killed.

In those days, in Ireland, it was not only the man of the military, but of every profession, who had to work his way to eminence with the sword or pistol. Each political party had its regular corps of bullies, or fire-eaters, as they were called, who qualified themselves for being the pests of society by spending all their spare time in firing at targets. They boasted that they could hit an opponent in any part of his body they pleased, and made up their minds before the encounter began whether they should kill him, disable, or disfigure him for life—lay him on a bed of suffering for a twelvemonth, or merely graze a limb.

The evil had reached an alarming height, when, in the year

1808, an opportunity was afforded to King George III. of showing in a striking manner his detestation of the practice, and of setting an example to the Irish that such murders were not to be committed with impunity. A dispute arose, in the month of June, 1807, between Major Campbell and Captain Boyd, officers of the 21st regiment, stationed in Ireland, about the proper manner of giving the word of command on parade. Hot words ensued on this slight occasion, and the result was a challenge from Campbell to Boyd. They retired into the mess-room shortly afterwards, and each stationed himself at a corner, the distance obliquely being but seven paces. Here, without friends or seconds being present, they fired at each other, and Captain Boyd fell mortally wounded between the fourth and fifth ribs. A surgeon who came in shortly, found him sitting in a chair, vomiting and suffering great agony. He was led into another room, Major Campbell following, in great distress and perturbation of mind. Boyd survived but eighteen hours, and just before his death, said, in reply to a question from his opponent, that the duel was not fair, and added, "You hurried me, Campbell—you're a bad man."—"Good God!" replied Campbell, "will you mention before these gentlemen, was not everything fair? Did you not say that you were ready?" Boyd answered faintly, "Oh, no! you know I wanted you to wait and have friends." On being again asked whether all was fair, the dying man faintly murmured "Yes:" but in a minute after, he said, "You're a bad man!" Campbell was now in great agitation, and wringing his hands convulsively, he exclaimed, "Oh, Boyd! you are the happiest man of the two! Do you forgive me?" Boyd replied, "I forgive you—I feel for you, as I know you do for me." He shortly afterwards expired, and Major Campbell made his escape from Ireland, and lived for some months with his family under an assumed name, in the neighbourhood of Chelsea. He was, however, apprehended, and brought to trial at Armagh, in August, 1808. He said while in prison, that, if found guilty of murder, he should suffer as an example to duellists in Ireland; but he endeavoured to buoy himself up, with the hope that the jury would only convict him of manslaughter. It was proved in evidence upon the trial, that the duel was not fought immediately after the offence was given, but that

Major Campbell went home and drank tea with his family, before he sought Boyd for the fatal encounter. The jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against him, but recommended him to mercy on the ground that the duel had been a fair one. He was condemned to die on the Monday following, but was afterwards respited for a few days longer. In the mean time the greatest exertions were made in his behalf. His unfortunate wife went upon her knees before the Prince of Wales, to move him to use his influence with the King, in favour of her unhappy husband. Everything a fond wife and a courageous woman could do, she tried, to gain the royal clemency; but George III. was inflexible, in consequence of the representations of the Irish Viceroy that an example was necessary. The law was therefore allowed to take its course, and the victim of a false spirit of honour died the death of a felon.

The most inveterate duellists of the present day are the students in the Universities of Germany. They fight on the most frivolous pretences, and settle with swords and pistols the schoolboy disputes which in other countries are arranged by the more harmless medium of the fisticuffs. It was at one time the custom among these savage youths to prefer the sword combat, for the facility it gave them of cutting off the noses of their opponents. To disfigure them in this manner was an object of ambition, and the German duellists reckoned the number of these disgusting trophies which they had borne away, with as much satisfaction as a successful general the provinces he had reduced or the cities he had taken.

But it would be wearisome to enter into the minute detail of all the duels of modern times. If an examination were made into the general causes which produced them, it would be found that in every case they had been either of the most trivial or the most unworthy nature. Parliamentary duels were at one time very common, and amongst the names of those who have soiled a great reputation by conforming to the practice, may be mentioned those of Warren Hastings, Sir Philip Francis, Wilkes, Pitt, Fox, Grattan, Curran, Tierney, and Canning. So difficult is it even for the superior mind to free itself from the trammels with which foolish opinion has enswathed it—not one of these celebrated persons who did not in his secret soul condemn the folly to which he lent him-

self. The bonds of reason, though iron-strong, are easily burst through; but those of folly, though lithe and frail as the rushes by a stream, defy the stoutest heart to snap them asunder. Colonel Thomas, an officer of the Guards, who was killed in a duel, added the following clause to his will the night before he died:—"In the first place, I commit my soul to Almighty God, in hope of his mercy and pardon for the irreligious step I now (in compliance with the unwarrantable customs of this wicked world) put myself under the necessity of taking." How many have been in the same state of mind as this wise, foolish man! He knew his error, and abhorred it, but could not resist it, for fear of the opinion of the prejudiced and unthinking. No other could have blamed him for refusing to fight a duel.

The list of duels that have sprung from the most degrading causes might be stretched out to an almost indefinite extent. Sterne's father fought a duel about a goose; and the great Raleigh about a tavern bill.* Scores of duels (many of them fatal) have been fought from disputes at cards, or a place at a theatre, while hundreds of challenges, given and accepted over-night, in a fit of drunkenness, have been fought out the next morning to the death of one or both of the antagonists.

Two of the most notorious duels of modern times had their origin in causes no more worthy than the quarrel of a dog and the favour of a prostitute: that between Macnamara and Montgomery arising from the former; and that between Best and Lord Camelford, from the latter. The dog of Montgomery attacked a dog belonging to Macnamara, and each

* Raleigh, at one period of his life, appeared to be an inveterate duellist, and it was said of him that he had been engaged in more encounters of the kind than any man of note among his contemporaries. More than one fellow-creature he had deprived of life; but he lived long enough to be convinced of the sinfulness of his conduct, and made a solemn vow never to fight another duel. The following anecdote of his forbearance is well known, but it will bear repetition:—

A dispute arose in a coffee-house between him and a young man on some trivial point, and the latter, losing his temper, impertinently spat in the face of the veteran. Sir Walter, instead of running him through the body, as many would have done, or challenging him to mortal combat, coolly took out his handkerchief, wiped his face, and said, "Young man, if I could as easily wipe from my conscience the stain of killing you, as I can this spittle from my face, you should not live another minute." The young man immediately begged his pardon.

master interfering in behalf of his own animal, high words ensued. The result was the giving and accepting a challenge to mortal combat. The parties met on the following day, when Montgomery was shot dead, and his antagonist severely wounded. This affair created a great sensation at the time, and Heaviside, the surgeon who attended at the fatal field to render his assistance, if necessary, was arrested as an accessary to the murder, and committed to Newgate.

In the duel between Best and Lord Camelford, two pistols were used which were considered to be the best in England. One of them was thought slightly superior to the other, and it was agreed that the belligerents should toss up a piece of money to decide the choice of weapons. Best gained it, and, at the first discharge, Lord Camelford fell, mortally wounded. But little sympathy was expressed for his fate; he was a confirmed duellist, had been engaged in many meetings of the kind, and the blood of more than one fellow-creature lay at his door. As he had sowed, so did he reap; and the violent man met an appropriate death.

It now only remains to notice the means that have been taken to stay the prevalence of this madness of false honour in the various countries of the civilized world. The efforts of the governments of France and England have already been mentioned, and their want of success is but too well known. The same efforts have been attended with the same results elsewhere. In despotic countries, where the will of the monarch has been strongly expressed and vigorously supported, a diminution of the evil has for a while resulted, but only to be increased again, when death relaxed the iron grasp, and a successor appeared of less decided opinions upon the subject. This was the case in Prussia under the great Frederick, of whose aversion to duelling a popular anecdote is recorded. It is stated of him that he permitted duelling in his army, but only upon the condition that the combatants should fight in the presence of a whole battalion of infantry, drawn up on purpose, to see fair play. The latter received strict orders, when one of the belligerents fell, to shoot the other immediately. It is added, that the known determination of the King effectually put a stop to the practice.

The Emperor Joseph II. of Austria was as firm as Frede-

rick, although the measures he adopted were not so singular. The following letter explains his views on the subject :—

"To General * * * * *.

"My General,

"You will immediately arrest the Count of K. and Captain W. The Count is young, passionate, and influenced by wrong notions of birth and a false spirit of honour. Captain W. is an old soldier, who will adjust every dispute with the sword and pistol, and who has received the challenge of the young Count with unbecoming warmth.

"I will suffer no duelling in my army. I despise the principles of those who attempt to justify the practice, and who would run each other through the body in cold blood.

"When I have officers who bravely expose themselves to every danger in facing the enemy—who at all times exhibit courage, valour, and resolution in attack and defence, I esteem them highly. The coolness with which they meet death on such occasions is serviceable to their country, and at the same time redounds to their own honour; but should there be men amongst them who are ready to sacrifice everything to their vengeance and hatred, I despise them. I consider such a man as no better than a Roman gladiator.

"Order a court-martial to try the two officers. Investigate the subject of their dispute with that impartiality which I demand from every judge; and he that is guilty, let him be a sacrifice to his fate and the laws.

"Such a barbarous custom, which suits the age of the Tamerlanes and Bajazets, and which has often had such melancholy effects on single families, I will have suppressed and punished, even if it should deprive me of one half of my officers. There are still men who know how to unite the character of a hero with that of a good subject; and he only can be so who respects the laws.

"August, 1771."

"Joseph."*

* Vide the Letters of Joseph II. to distinguished Princes and Statesmen, published for the first time in England in "The Pamphleteer" for 1821. They were originally published in Germany a few years previously, and threw a great light upon the character of that monarch and the events of his reign.

In the United States of America the code varies considerably. In one or two of the still wild and simple States of the Far West, where no duel has yet been fought, there is no specific law upon the subject beyond that in the Decalogue, which says, "Thou shalt do no murder." But duelling everywhere follows the steps of modern civilization, and by the time the backwoodsman is transformed into the citizen, he has imbibed the false notions of honour which are prevalent in Europe, and around him, and is ready, like his progenitors, to settle his differences with the pistol. In the majority of the States the punishment for challenging, fighting, or acting as second, is solitary imprisonment and hard labour for any period less than a year, and disqualification for serving any public office for twenty years. In Vermont the punishment is total disqualification for office, deprivation of the rights of citizenship, and a fine; in fatal cases, the same punishment as that of murderers. In Rhode Island, the combatant, though death does not ensue, is liable to be carted to the gallows, with a rope about his neck, and to sit in this trim for an hour, exposed to the peltings of the mob. He may be further imprisoned for a year, at the option of the magistrate. In Connecticut, the punishment is total disqualification for office or employ, and a fine, varying from one hundred to a thousand dollars. The laws of Illinois require certain officers of the state to make oath, previous to their instalment, that they have never been, nor ever will be, concerned in a duel.*

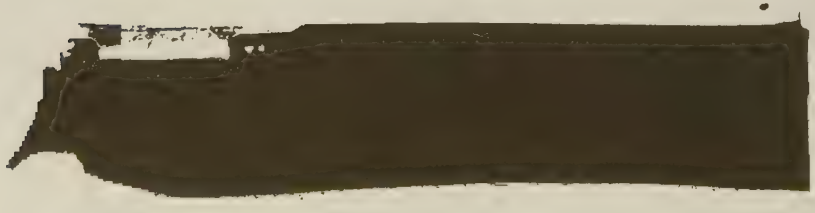
Amongst the edicts against duelling promulgated at various times in Europe, may be mentioned that of Augustus, King of Poland, in 1712, which decreed the punishment of death against principals and seconds, and minor punishments against the bearers of a challenge. An edict was also published at Munich, in 1773, according to which both principals and seconds, even in duels where no one was either killed or wounded, should be hanged, and their bodies buried at the foot of the gallows.

The King of Naples issued an ordinance against duelling in 1838, in which the punishment of death is decreed against all concerned in a fatal duel. The bodies of those killed, and of those who may be executed in consequence, are to be buried

* "Encyclopædia Americana," art. Duelling.

in unconsecrated ground, and without any religious ceremony; nor is any monument to be erected on the spot. The punishment for duels in which either, or both, are wounded, and for those in which no damage whatever is done, varies according to the case, and consists of fine, imprisonment, loss of rank and honours, and incapacity for filling any public situation. Bearers of challenges may also be punished with fine and imprisonment.

It might be imagined that enactments so severe all over the civilized world would finally eradicate a custom, the prevalence of which every wise and good man must deplore. But the frowns of the law never yet have taught, and never will teach, men to desist from this practice, as long as it is felt that the lawgiver sympathizes with it in his heart. The stern judge upon the bench may say to the unfortunate wight who has been called a liar by some unmannerly opponent, "If you challenge him, you meditate murder, and are guilty of murder!" but the same judge, divested of his robes of state, and mixing in the world with other men, would say, "If you do not challenge him, if you do not run the risk of making yourself a murderer, you will be looked upon as a mean-spirited wretch, unfit to associate with your fellows, and deserving nothing but their scorn and their contempt!" It is society, and not the duellist, who is to blame. Female influence, too, which is so powerful in leading men either to good or to evil, takes, in this case, the evil part. Mere animal bravery has, unfortunately, such charms in the female eye, that a successful duellist is but too often regarded as a sort of hero; and the man who refuses to fight, though of truer courage, is thought a poltroon, who may be trampled on. Mr. Graves, a member of the American Legislature, who, early in 1838, killed a Mr. Cilley in a duel, truly and eloquently said, on the floor of the House of Representatives, when lamenting the unfortunate issue of that encounter, that society was more to blame than he was. "Public opinion," said the repentant orator, "is practically the paramount law of the land. Every other law, both human and divine, ceases to be observed; yea, withers and perishes in contact with it. It was this paramount law of this nation, and of this House, that forced me, under the penalty of dishonour, to subject myself to the code, which impelled me unwillingly into this tragical affair. Upon



the heads of this nation, and at the doors of this House, rests the blood with which my unfortunate hands have been stained!"

As long as society is in this mood; as long as it thinks that the man who refuses to resent an insult, deserved that insult, and should be scouted accordingly, so long, it is to be feared, will duelling exist, however severe the laws may be. Men must have redress for injuries inflicted, and when those injuries are of such a nature that no tribunal will take cognizance of them, the injured will take the law into their own hands, and right themselves in the opinion of their fellows, at the hazard of their lives. Much as the sage may effect to despise the opinion of the world, there are few who would not rather expose their lives a hundred times than be condemned to live on, in society, but not of it—a by-word of reproach to all who know their history, and a mark for scorn to point his finger at.

The only practicable means for diminishing the force of a custom which is the disgrace of civilization, seems to be the establishment of a court of honour, which should take cognizance of all those delicate and almost intangible offences which yet wound so deeply. The court established by Louis XIV. might be taken as a model. No man now fights a duel when a fit apology has been offered, and it should be the duty of this court to weigh dispassionately the complaint of every man injured in his honour, either by word or deed, and to force the offender to make a public apology. If he refused the apology, he would be the breaker of a second law; an offender against a high court, as well as against the man he had injured, and might be punished with fine and imprisonment, the latter to last until he saw the error of his conduct, and made the concession which the court demanded.

If, after the establishment of this tribunal, men should be found of a nature so bloodthirsty as not to be satisfied with its peaceful decisions, and should resort to the old and barbarous mode of an appeal to the pistol, some means might be found of dealing with them. To hang them as murderers would be of no avail; for to such men death would have few terrors. Shame alone would bring them to reason. The following code, it is humbly suggested to all future legislators upon the subject, would, in conjunction with the establishment of a court of honour, do much towards eradicating this blot from

society. Every man who fought a duel, even though he did not wound his opponent, should be tried, and, upon proof of the fact, be sentenced to have his right hand cut off. The world would then know his true character as long as he lived. If his habits of duelling were so inveterate, and he should learn to fire a pistol with his left hand, he should, upon conviction of a second offence, lose that hand also. This law, which should allow no commutation of the punishment, under any circumstances, would lend strength and authority to the court of honour. In the course of a few years duelling would be ranked amongst exploded follies, and men would begin to wonder that a custom so barbarous and so impious had ever existed amongst them.

THE LOVE OF THE MARVELLOUS AND THE DISBELIEF OF THE TRUE.

"WELL, son John," said the old woman, "and what wonderful things did you meet with all the time you were at sea?—"Oh! mother," replied John, "I saw many strange things."—"Tell us all about them," replied his mother, "for I long to hear your adventures."—"Well then," said John, "as we were sailing over the Line, what do you think we saw?"—"I can't imagine," replied his mother.—"Well, we saw a fish rise out of the sea, and fly over our ship!" "O!" John! John! what a liar you are!" said his mother, shaking her head, and smiling incredulously. "True as death!" said John; "and we saw still more wonderful things than that." —"Let us hear them," said his mother, shaking her head again; "and tell the truth, John, if you can."—"Believe it, or believe it not, as you please," replied her son; "but as we were sailing up the Red Sea, our captain thought he should like some fish for dinner; so he told us to throw our nets, and catch some."—"Well," inquired his mother, seeing that he paused in his story. "Well," rejoined her son, "we *did* throw them, and, at the very first haul, we brought up a chariot-wheel, made all of gold, and inlaid with diamonds!" "Lord bless us!" said his mother, "and what did the captain say?"—"Why, he said it was one of the wheels of Pharaoh's chariot, that had lain in the Red Sea ever since that wicked King was drowned, with all his host, while pursuing the Israelites."—"Well, well," said his mother, lifting up her hands in admiration; "now, that's very possible, and I think the captain was a very sensible man. Tell me such stories as *that*, and I'll believe you; but never talk to me of such things

as flying fish! No, no, John, such stories won't go down with me, I can assure you!"

Such old women as the sailor's mother, in the above well-known anecdote, are by no means rare in the world. Every age and country has produced them. They have been found in high places, and have sat down among the learned of the earth. Instances must be familiar to every reader in which the same person was willing, with greedy credulity, to swallow the most extravagant fiction, and yet refuse credence to a philosophical fact. The same Greeks who believed readily that Jupiter wooed Leda in the form of a swan, denied stoutly that there were any physical causes for storms and thunder, and treated as impious those who attempted to account for them on true philosophical principles.

The reasons that thus lead mankind to believe the marvellously false, and to disbelieve the marvellously true, may be easily gathered. Of all the offspring of Time, Error is the most ancient, and is so old and familiar an acquaintance, that Truth, when discovered, comes upon most of us like an intruder, and meets the intruder's welcome. We all pay an involuntary homage to antiquity—a "blind homage," as Bacon calls it in his "Novum Organum," which tends greatly to the obstruction of truth. To the great majority of mortal eyes, time sanctifies everything that he does not destroy. The mere fact of anything's being spared by the great foe makes it a favourite with us, who are sure to fall his victims. To call a prejudice "time-hallowed," is to open a way for it into hearts where it never before penetrated. Some peculiar custom may disgrace the people amongst whom it flourishes; yet men of a little wisdom refuse to aid in its extirpation, merely because it is old. Thus it is with human belief, and thus it is we bring shame upon our own intellect.

To this cause may be added another, also mentioned by Lord Bacon—a misdirected zeal in matters of religion, which induces so many to decry a newly-discovered truth, because the Divine records contain no allusion to it, or because, at first sight, it appears to militate, not against religion, but against some obscure passage which has never been fairly interpreted. The old woman in the story could not believe that there was such a creature as a flying-fish, because her Bible did not tell her so, but she believed that her son had

drawn up the golden and bejewelled wheel from the Red Sea, because her Bible informed her that Pharaoh was drowned there.

Upon a similar principle the monks of the Inquisition believed that the devil appeared visibly among men, that St. Anthony pulled his nose with a pair of red-hot pincers, and that the relics of the saints worked miracles; yet they would not believe Galileo, when he proved that the earth turned round the sun.

Keppler, when he asserted the same fact, could gain no bread, and little credence; but when he pretended to tell fortunes and cast nativities, the whole town flocked to him, and paid him enormous fees for his falsehood.

When Roger Bacon invented the telescope and the magic lantern, no one believed that the unaided ingenuity of man could have done it; but when some wiseacres asserted that the devil had appeared to him, and given him the knowledge which he turned to such account, no one was bold enough to assert that it was improbable. His hint that saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal, mixed in certain proportions, would produce effects similar to thunder and lightning, was disregarded or disbelieved; but the legend of the brazen head which delivered oracles was credited for many ages.*

Solomon De Cans, who, in the time of Cardinal Richelieu,

* Godwin, in his "Lives of the Necromancers," gives the following version of this legend. Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay entertained the project of enclosing England with a wall, so as to render it inaccessible to any invader. They accordingly raised the devil, as the person best able to inform them how this was to be done. The devil advised them to make a brazen head, with all the internal structure and organs of a human head. The construction would cost them much time, and they must wait with patience till the faculty of speech descended upon it. Finally, however, it would become an oracle, and, if the question were propounded to it, would teach them the solution of their problem. The friars spent seven years in bringing the subject to perfection, and waited day after day in expectation that it would utter articulate sounds. At length nature became exhausted in them, and they lay down to sleep, having first given it strictly in charge to a servant of theirs, clownish in nature, but of strict fidelity, that he should awaken them the moment the image began to speak. That period arrived. The head uttered sounds, but such as the clown judged unworthy of notice. "*Time is!*" it said. No notice was taken, and a long pause ensued. "*Time was!*"—a similar pause, and no notice. "*Time is passed!*" The moment these words were uttered, a tremendous storm ensued, with thunder and lightning, and the head was shivered into a thousand pieces. Thus the experiment of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay came to nothing.

conceived the idea of a steam-engine, was shut up in the Bastille as a madman, because the idea of such an extraordinary instrument was too preposterous for the wise age that believed in all the absurdities of witchcraft.

When Harvey first proved the circulation of the blood, every tongue was let loose against him. The thing was too obviously an imposition, and an attempt to deceive that public who believed that a king's touch had power to cure the scrofula. That a dead criminal's hand, rubbed against a wen, would cure it, was reasonable enough; but that the blood flowed through the veins was beyond all probability.

In our own day, a similar fate awaited the beneficent discovery of Dr. Jenner. That vaccination could abate the virulence of, or preserve from, the small-pox, was quite incredible; none but a cheat and a quack could assert it: but that the introduction of the vaccine matter into the human frame could endow men with the qualities of a cow, was quite probable. Many of the poorer people actually dreaded that their children would grow hairy and horned as cattle, if they suffered them to be vaccinated.

The Jesuit, Father Labat, the shrewd and learned traveller in South America, relates an experiment which he made upon the credulity of some native Peruvians. Holding a powerful lens in his hand, and concentrating the rays of the sun upon the naked arm of an admiring savage, he soon made him roar with pain. All the tribe looked on, first with wonder, and then with indignation and wonder both combined. In vain the philosopher attempted to explain the cause of the phenomenon—in vain he offered to convince them that there was nothing devilish in the experiment—he was thought to be in league with the infernal gods to draw down the fire from Heaven, and was looked upon, himself, as an awful and supernatural being. Many attempts were made to gain possession of the lens, with the view of destroying it, and thereby robbing the Western stranger of the means of bringing upon them the vengeance of his deities.

Very similar was the conduct of that inquiring Brahmin, which is related by Forbes in his Oriental Memoirs. The Brahmin had a mind better cultivated than his fellows; he was smitten with a love for the knowledge of Europe—read

English books—pored over the pages of the Encyclopedia, and profited by various philosophical instruments; but on religious questions the Brahmin was firm to the faith of his caste and the doctrine of the Metempsychosis. Lest he might sacrilegiously devour his progenitors, he abstained from all animal food; and thinking that he ate nothing which enjoyed life, he supported himself, like his brethren, upon fruits and vegetables. All the knowledge that did not run counter to this belief, he sought after with avidity, and bade fair to become the wisest of his race. In an evil hour, his English friend and instructor exhibited a very powerful solar microscope, by means of which he showed him that every drop of water that he drank teemed with life—that every fruit was like a world, covered with innumerable animalculæ, each of which was fitted by its organization for the sphere in which it moved, and had its wants, and the capability of supplying them as completely as visible animals millions of times its bulk. The English philosopher expected that his Hindoo friend would be enraptured at the vast field of knowledge thus suddenly opened out to him, but he was deceived. The Brahmin from that time became an altered man—thoughtful, gloomy, reserved, and discontented. He applied repeatedly to his friend that he would make him a present of the microscope; but as it was the only one of its kind in India, and the owner set a value upon it for other reasons, he constantly refused the request, but offered him the loan of it for any period he might require. But nothing short of an unconditional gift of the instrument would satisfy the Brahmin, who became at last so importunate that the patience of the Englishman was exhausted, and he gave it him. A gleam of joy shot across the care-worn features of the Hindoo as he clutched it, and bounding with an exulting leap into the garden, he seized a large stone, and dashed the instrument into a thousand pieces. When called upon to explain his extraordinary conduct, he said to his friend, "Oh that I had remained in that happy state of ignorance wherein you first found me! Yet will I confess that, as my knowledge increased, so did my pleasure, until I beheld the last wonders of the microscope; from that moment I have been tormented by doubt and perplexed by mystery: my mind, overwhelmed by chaotic confusion, knows not where to rest, nor how to extricate itself from such a

maze. I am miserable, and must continue to be so, until I enter on another stage of existence. I am a solitary individual among fifty millions of people, all educated in the same belief with myself—all happy in their ignorance! So may they ever remain! I shall keep the secret within my own bosom, where it will corrode my peace and break my rest. But I shall have some satisfaction in knowing that I alone feel those pangs which, had I not destroyed the instrument, might have been extensively communicated, and rendered thousands miserable! Forgive me, my valuable friend! and oh, convey no more implements of knowledge and destruction!"

Many a learned man may smile at the ignorance of the Peruvian and the Hindoo, unconscious that he himself is just as ignorant and as prejudiced. Who does not remember the outcry against the science of geology, which has hardly yet subsided? Its professors were impiously and absurdly accused of designing to "hurl the Creator from his throne." They were charged with sapping the foundations of religion, and of propping atheism by the aid of a pretended science.

The very same principle which leads to the rejection of the true, leads to the encouragement of the false. Thus we may account for the success which has attended great imposters, at times when the truth, though not half so wondrous as their impositions, has been disregarded as extravagant and preposterous. The man who wishes to cheat the people, must needs found his operations upon some prejudice or belief that already exists. Thus the philosophic pretenders who told fortunes by the stars cured all diseases by one nostrum, and preserved from evil by charms and amulets, ran with the current of popular belief. Errors that were consecrated by time and long familiarity, they heightened and embellished, and succeeded to their heart's content; but the preacher of truth had a foundation to make as well as a superstructure, a difficulty which did not exist for the preacher of error. Columbus preached a new world, but was met with distrust and incredulity; had he preached with as much zeal and earnestness the discovery of some valley in the old one, where diamonds hung upon the trees, or a herb grew that cured all the ills incidental to humanity, he would have found a warm and hearty welcome—might have sold dried cabbage leaves for his wonderful herb, and made his fortune.

In fact, it will be found, in the history of every generation and race of men, that whenever a choice of belief between the "Wondrously False" and the "Wondrously True" is given to ignorance or prejudice, that their choice will be fixed upon the first, for the reason that it is most akin to their own nature. The great majority of mankind, and even of the wisest among us, are still in the condition of the sailor's mother—believing and disbelieving on the same grounds that she did—protesting against the flying-fish, but cherishing the golden wheels. Thousands there are amongst us, who, rather than pin their faith in the one fish, would believe not only in the wheel of gold, but the chariot—not only in the chariot, but in the horses and the driver.

POPULAR FOLLIES IN GREAT CITIES.

La faridondaine—la faridondon,
Vive la faridondaine!

BERANGER.

THE popular humours of a great city are a never-failing source of amusement to the man whose sympathies are hospitable enough to embrace all his kind, and who, refined though he may be himself, will not sneer at the humble wit or grotesque peculiarities of the boozing mechanic, the squalid beggar, the vicious urchin, and all the motley group of the idle, the reckless, and the imitative that swarm in the alleys and broadways of a metropolis. He who walks through a great city to find subjects for weeping, may, God knows; find plenty at every corner to wring his heart; but let such a man walk on his course, and enjoy his grief alone—we are not of those who would accompany him. The miseries of us poor earth-dwellers gain no alleviation from the sympathy of those who merely hunt them out to be pathetic over them. The weeping philosopher too often impairs his eyesight by his woe, and becomes unable from his tears to see the remedies for the evils which he deplores. Thus it will often be found that the man of no tears is the truest philanthropist, as he is the best physician who wears a cheerful face, even in the worst of cases.

So many pens have been employed to point out the miseries, and so many to condemn the crimes and vices, and more serious follies of the multitude, that ours shall not increase the number, at least in this chapter. Our present task shall be less ungracious, and wandering through the busy haunts of great cities, we shall seek only for amusement, and note as

we pass a few of the harmless follies and whimsies of the poor.

And, first of all, walk where we will, we cannot help hearing from every side a phrase repeated with delight, and received with laughter, by men with hard hands and dirty faces—by saucy butcher lads and errand-boys—by loose women—by hackney coachmen, cabriolet drivers, and idle fellows who loiter at the corners of the streets. Not one utters this phrase without producing a laugh from all within hearing. It seems applicable to every circumstance, and is the universal answer to every question; in short, it is the favourite slang phrase of the day, a phrase that, while its brief season of popularity lasts, throws a dash of fun and frolicsomeness over the existence of squalid poverty and ill-requited labour, and gives them reason to laugh as well as their more fortunate fellows in a higher stage of society.

London is peculiarly fertile in this sort of phrases, which spring up suddenly, no one knows exactly in what spot, and pervades the whole population in a few hours, no one knows how. Many years ago the favourite phrase (for, though but a monosyllable, it was a phrase in itself) was Quoz. This odd word took the fancy of the multitude in an extraordinary degree, and very soon acquired an almost boundless meaning. When vulgar wit wished to mark its incredulity and raise a laugh at the same time, there was no resource so sure as this popular piece of slang. When a man was asked a favour which he did not choose to grant, he marked his sense of the suitor's unparalleled presumption by exclaiming *Quoz!* When a mischievous urchin wished to annoy a passenger, and create mirth for his chums, he looked him in the face, and cried out *Quoz!* and the exclamation never failed in its object. When a disputant was desirous of throwing a doubt upon the veracity of his opponent, and getting summarily rid of an argument which he could not overturn, he uttered the word *Quoz*, with a contemptuous curl of his lip and an impatient shrug of his shoulders. The universal monosyllable conveyed all his meaning, and not only told his opponent that he lied, but that he erred egregiously if he thought that any one was such a nincompoop as to believe him. Every alehouse resounded with *Quoz;* every street corner was noisy with it, and every wall for miles around was chalked with it.

But, like all other earthly things, *Quoz* had its season, and

passed away as suddenly as it arose, never again to be the pet and the idol of the populace. A new claimant drove it from its place, and held undisputed sway till, in its turn, it was hurled from its pre-eminence, and a successor appointed in its stead.

"*What a shocking bad hat!*" was the phrase that was next in vogue. No sooner had it become universal, than thousands of idle but sharp eyes were on the watch for the passenger whose hat showed any signs, however slight, of ancient service. Immediately the cry arose, and, like the war-whoop of the Indians, was repeated by a hundred discordant throats. He was a wise man who, finding himself under these circumstances "the observed of all observers," bore his honours meekly. He who showed symptoms of ill feeling at the imputations cast upon his hat, only brought upon himself redoubled notice. The mob soon perceive whether a man is irritable, and, if of their own class, they love to make sport of him. When such a man, and with such a hat, passed in those days through a crowded neighbourhood, he might think himself fortunate if his annoyances were confined to the shouts and cries of the populace. The obnoxious hat was often snatched from his head, and thrown into the gutter by some practical joker, and then raised, covered with mud, upon the end of a stick, for the admiration of the spectators, who held their sides with laughter, and exclaimed in the pauses of their mirth, "*Oh! what a shocking bad hat!*" "*What a shocking bad hat!*" Many a nervous poor man, whose purse could but ill spare the outlay, doubtless purchased a new hat before the time, in order to avoid exposure in this manner.

The origin of this singular saying, which made fun for the metropolis for months, is not involved in the same obscurity as that which shrouds the origin of *Quoz* and some others. There had been a hotly-contested election for the borough of Southwark, and one of the candidates was an eminent hatter. This gentleman, in canvassing the electors, adopted a somewhat professional mode of conciliating their good-will, and of bribing them without letting them perceive that they were bribed. Whenever he called upon or met a voter whose hat was not of the best material, or, being so, had seen its best days, he invariably said, "*What a shocking bad hat you have got; call at my warehouse, and you shall have a new one!*" Upon the day of election this circumstance was remembered,

and his opponents made the most of it, by inciting the crowd to keep up an incessant cry of "*What a shocking bad hat!*" all the time the honourable candidate was addressing them. From Southwark the phrase spread over all London, and reigned, for a time, the supreme slang of the season.

Hookey Walker, derived from the chorus of a popular ballad, was also high in favour at one time, and served, like its predecessor, *Quoz*, to answer all questions. In the course of time the latter word alone became the favourite, and was uttered with a peculiar drawl upon the first syllable, and a sharp turn upon the last. If a lively servant girl was importuned for a kiss by a fellow she did not care about, she cocked her little nose, and cried "*Walker!*" If a dustman asked his friend for the loan of a shilling, and his friend was either unable or unwilling to accommodate him, the probable answer he would receive was "*Walker!*" If a drunken man was reeling along the streets, and a boy pulled his coat-tails, or a man knocked his hat over his eyes to make fun of him, the joke was always accompanied by the same exclamation. This lasted for two or three months, and "*Walker!*" walked off the stage, never more to be revived for the entertainment of that or any future generation.

The next phrase was a most preposterous one. Who invented it, how it arose, or where it was first heard, are alike unknown. Nothing about it is certain, but that for months it was *the* slang *par excellence* of the Londoners, and afforded them a vast gratification. "*There he goes with his eye out!*" or "*There she goes with her eye out!*" as the sex of the party alluded to might be, was in the mouth of everybody who knew the town. The sober part of the community were as much puzzled by this unaccountable saying as the vulgar were delighted with it. The wise thought it very foolish, but the many thought it very funny, and the idle amused themselves by chalking it upon walls, or scribbling it upon monuments. But, "all that's bright must fade," even in slang. The people grew tired of their hobby, and "*There he goes with his eye out!*" was heard no more in its accustomed haunts.

Another very odd phrase came into repute in a brief space afterwards, in the form of the impertinent and not universally apposite query, "*Has your mother sold her mangle?*" But its popularity was not of that boisterous and cordial kind

which ensures a long continuance of favour. What tended to impede its progress was, that it could not be well applied to the older portions of society. It consequently ran but a brief career, and then sank into oblivion. Its successor enjoyed a more extended fame, and laid its foundations so deep, that years and changing fashions have not sufficed to eradicate it. This phrase was "*Flare up!*" and it is, even now, a colloquialism in common use. It took its rise in the time of the Reform riots, when Bristol was nearly half burned by the infuriated populace. The flames were said to have *flared up* in the devoted city. Whether there was anything peculiarly captivating in the sound, or in the idea of these words, it is hard to say; but whatever was the reason, it tickled the mob-fancy mightily, and drove all other slang out of the field before it. Nothing was to be heard all over London but "*flare up!*" It answered all questions, settled all disputes, was applied to all persons, all things, and all circumstances, and became suddenly the most comprehensive phrase in the English language. The man who had overstepped the bounds of decorum in his speech was said to have *flared up;* he who had paid visits too repeated to the gin-shop, and got damaged in consequence, had *flared up.* To put one's-self into a passion; to stroll out on a nocturnal frolic, and alarm a neighbourhood, or to create a disturbance in any shape, was to *flare up.* A lover's quarrel was a *flare up;* so was a boxing-match between two blackguards in the streets, and the preachers of sedition and revolution recommended the English nation to *flare up*, like the French. So great a favourite was the word, that people loved to repeat it for its very sound. They delighted apparently in hearing their own organs articulate it; and labouring men, when none who could respond to the call were within hearing, would often startle the aristocratic echoes of the West by the well-known slang phrase of the East. Even in the dead hours of the night, the ears of those who watched late, or who could not sleep, were saluted with the same sound. The drunkard reeling home showed that he was still a man and a citizen, by calling "*flare up*" in the pauses of his hiccough. Drink had deprived him of the power of arranging all other ideas; his intellect was sunk to the level of the brute's; but he clung to humanity by the one last link of the popular cry. While he could vociferate that

sound, he had rights as an Englishman, and would not sleep in the gutter, like a dog! Onwards he went, disturbing quiet streets and comfortable people by his whoop, till exhausted nature could support him no more, and he rolled powerless into the road. When, in due time afterwards, the policeman stumbled upon him as he lay, that guardian of the peace turned the full light of his lantern on his face, and exclaimed, "Here's a poor devil who's been flaring up!" Then came the stretcher, on which the victim of deep potations was carried to the watchhouse, and pitched into a dirty cell, among a score of wretches about as far gone as himself, who saluted their new comrade by a loud, long shout of *flare up!*

So universal was this phrase, and so enduring seemed its popularity, that a speculator, who knew not the evanescence of slang, established a weekly newspaper under its name. But he was like the man who built his house upon the sand; his foundation gave way under him, and the phrase and the newspaper were washed into the mighty sea of the things that were. The people grew at last weary of the monotony, and "*flare up*" became vulgar even among them. Gradually it was left to little boys who did not know the world, and in process of time sank altogether into neglect. It is now heard no more as a piece of popular slang; but the words are still used to signify any sudden outburst either of fire, disturbance, or ill-nature.

The next phrase that enjoyed the favour of the million was less concise, and seems to have been originally aimed against precocious youths who gave themselves the airs of manhood before their time. "*Does your mother know you're out?*" was the provoking query addressed to young men of more than reasonable swagger, who smoked cigars in the streets, and wore false whiskers to look irresistible. We have seen many a conceited fellow who could not suffer a woman to pass him without staring her out of countenance, reduced at once into his natural insignificance by the mere utterance of this phrase. Apprentice lads and shopmen in their Sunday clothes held the words in abhorrence, and looked fierce when they were applied to them. Altogether the phrase had a very salutary effect, and in a thousand instances showed young Vanity, that it was not half so pretty and engaging as it thought itself. What rendered it so provoking was the

doubt it implied as to the capability of self-guidance possessed by the individual to whom it was addressed. "*Does your mother know you're out?*" was a query of mock concern and solicitude, implying regret and concern that one so young and inexperienced in the ways of a great city should be allowed to wander abroad without the guidance of a parent. Hence the great wrath of those who verged on manhood, but had not reached it, whenever they were made the subject of it. Even older heads did not like it; and the heir of a ducal house, and inheritor of a warrior's name, to whom they were applied by a cabriolet driver, who was ignorant of his rank, was so indignant at the affront, that he summoned the offender before the magisterial bench. The fellow had wished to impose upon his Lordship by asking double the fare he was entitled to, and when his Lordship resisted the demand, he was insultingly asked, "If his mother knew he was out?" All the drivers on the stand joined in the query, and his Lordship was fain to escape their laughter by walking away with as much haste as his dignity would allow. The man pleaded ignorance that his customer was a Lord, but offended justice fined him for his mistake.

When this phrase had numbered its appointed days, it died away, like its predecessors, and "*Who are you?*" reigned in its stead. This new favourite, like a mushroom, seems to have sprung up in a night, or, like a frog in Cheapside, to have come down in a sudden shower. One day it was unheard, unknown, uninvented; the next it pervaded London; every alley resounded with it; every highway was musical with it,

> "And street to street, and lane to lane flung back
> The one unvarying cry."

The phrase was uttered quickly, and with a sharp sound upon the first and last words, leaving the middle one little more than an aspiration. Like all its compeers which had been extensively popular, it was applicable to almost every variety of circumstance. The lovers of a plain answer to a plain question did not like it at all. Insolence made use of it to give offence; ignorance, to avoid exposing itself; and waggery, to create laughter. Every new comer into an alehouse taproom was asked unceremoniously, "*Who are you!*" and if he

looked foolish, scratched his head, and did not know what to reply, shouts of boisterous merriment resounded on every side. An authoritative disputant was not unfrequently put down, and presumption of every kind checked by the same query. When its popularity was at its height, a gentleman, feeling the hand of a thief in his pocket, turned suddenly round, and caught him in the act, exclaiming, "*Who are you?*" The mob which gathered round applauded to the very echo, and thought it the most capital joke they had ever heard—the very acmé of wit—the very essence of humour. Another circumstance, of a similar kind, gave an additional fillip to the phrase, and infused new life and vigour into it, just as it was dying away. The scene occurred in the chief criminal court of the kingdom. A prisoner stood at the bar; the offence with which he had been charged was clearly proved against him; his counsel had been heard, not in his defence, but in extenuation, insisting upon his previous good life and character, as reasons for the lenity of the court. "And where are your witnesses?" inquired the learned judge who presided. "Please you, my Lord, I knows the prisoner at the bar, and a more honester feller never breathed," said a rough voice in the gallery. The officers of the court looked aghast, and the strangers tittered with ill-suppressed laughter. "*Who are you?*" said the Judge, looking suddenly up, but with imperturbable gravity. The court was convulsed; the titter broke out into a laugh, and it was several minutes before silence and decorum could be restored. When the Ushers recovered their self-possession, they made diligent search for the profane transgressor; but he was not to be found. Nobody knew him; nobody had seen him. After a while the business of the court again proceeded. The next prisoner brought up for trial augured favourably of his prospects when he learned that the solemn lips of the representative of justice had uttered the popular phrase as if he felt and appreciated it. There was no fear that such a judge would use undue severity; his heart was with the people; he understood their language and their manners, and would make allowances for the temptations which drove them into crime. So thought many of the prisoners, if we may infer it from the fact, that the learned judge suddenly acquired an immense increase of popularity. The praise of his wit was in every

mouth, and "*Who are you?*" renewed its lease, and remained in possession of public favour for another term in consequence.

But it must not be supposed that there were no interregni between the dominion of one slang phrase and another. They did not arise in one long line of unbroken succession, but shared with song the possession of popular favour. Thus, when the people were in the mood for music, slang advanced its claims to no purpose, and, when they were inclined for slang, the sweet voice of music wooed them in vain. About twenty years ago London resounded with one chorus, with the love of which everybody seemed to be smitten. Girls and boys, young men and old, maidens and wives, and widows, were all alike musical. There was an absolute mania for singing, and the worst of it was, that, like good Father Philip, in the romance of "The Monastery," they seemed utterly unable to change their tune. "Cherry ripe!" "Cherry ripe!" was the universal cry of all the idle in the town. Every unmelodious voice gave utterance to it; every crazy fiddle, every cracked flute, every wheezy pipe, every street organ was heard in the same strain, until studious and quiet men stopped their ears in desperation, or fled miles away into the fields or woodlands, to be at peace. This plague lasted for a twelvemonth, until the very name of cherries became an abomination in the land. At last the excitement wore itself away, and the tide of favour set in a new direction. Whether it was another song or a slang phrase, is difficult to determine at this distance of time; but certain it is, that very shortly afterwards, people went mad upon a dramatic subject, and nothing was to be heard of but "Tom and Jerry." Verbal wit had amused the multitude long enough, and they became more practical in their recreation. Every youth on the town was seized with the fierce desire of distinguishing himself, by knocking down the "*charlies*," being locked up all night in a watch-house, or kicking up a row among loose women and blackguard men in the low dens of St. Giles's. Imitative boys vied with their elders in similar exploits, until this unworthy passion, for such it was, had lasted, like other follies, its appointed time, and the town became merry after another fashion. It was next thought the height of vulgar wit to answer all questions by placing the point of the thumb upon the tip of the nose, and twirling the fingers in the air. If one

man wished to insult or annoy another, he had only to make use of this cabalistic sign in his face, and his object was accomplished. At every street corner where a group was assembled, the spectator who was curious enough to observe their movements, would be sure to see the fingers of some of them at their noses, either as a mark of incredulity, surprise, refusal, or mockery, before he had watched two minutes. There is some remnant of this absurd custom to be seen to this day; but it is thought low, even among the vulgar.

About six years ago, London became again most preposterously musical. The *vox populi* wore itself hoarse by singing the praises of "The Sea, the Sea!" If a stranger (and a philosopher) had walked through London, and listened to the universal chorus, he might have constructed a very pretty theory upon the love of the English for the sea-service, and our acknowledged superiority over all other nations upon that element. "No wonder," he might have said, "that this people is invincible upon the ocean. The love of it mixes with their daily thoughts: they celebrate it even in the market-place: their street-minstrels excite charity by it; and high and low, young and old, male and female, chant *Io pæans* in its praise. Love is not honoured in the national songs of this warlike race—Bacchus is no god to them; they are men of sterner mould, and think only of 'the Sea, the Sea!' and the means of conquering upon it."

Such would, doubtless, have been his impression if he had taken the evidence only of his ears. Alas! in those days for the refined ears that *were* musical! great was their torture when discord, with its thousand diversities of tone, struck up this appalling anthem—there was no escape from it. The migratory minstrels of Savoy caught the strain, and pealed it down the long vistas of quiet streets, till their innermost and snuggest apartments re-echoed with the sound. Men were obliged to endure this crying evil for full six months, wearied to desperation, and made *sea*-sick on the dry land.

Several other songs sprang up in due succession afterwards, but none of them, with the exception of one, entitled "All round my Hat," enjoyed any extraordinary share of favour, until an American actor introduced a vile song called "Jim Crow." The singer sang his verses in appropriate costume, with grotesque gesticulations, and a sudden whirl of his body

at the close of each verse. It took the taste of the town immediately, and for months the ears of orderly people were stunned by the senseless chorus—

> "Turn about and wheel about,
> And do just so—
> Turn about and wheel about,
> And jump, Jim Crow!"

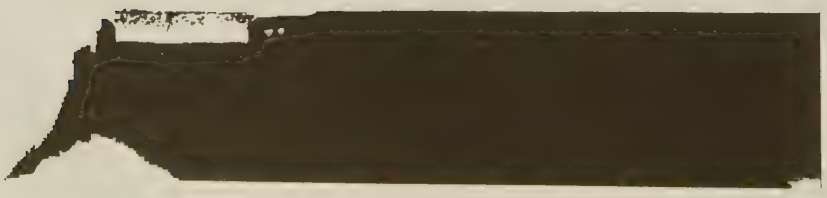
Street-minstrels blackened their faces in order to give proper effect to the verses; and fatherless urchins, who had to choose between thieving and singing for their livelihood, took the latter course, as likely to be the more profitable, as long as the public taste remained in that direction. The uncouth dance, its accompaniment, might be seen in its full perfection on market nights in any great thoroughfare; and the words of the song might be heard, piercing above all the din and buzz of the ever-moving multitude. He, the calm observer, who, during the hey-day popularity of this doggrel,

> "Sate beside the public way,
> Thick strewn with summer dust, and saw the stream
> Of people there was hurrying to and fro,
> Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,"

might have exclaimed with Shelley, whose fine lines we quote, that

> "The million, with fierce song and maniac dance,
> Did rage around."

The philosophic theorist we have already supposed soliloquizing upon the English character, and forming his opinion of it from their exceeding love for a sea-song, might, if he had again dropped suddenly into London, have formed another very plausible theory to account for our unremitting efforts for the abolition of the slave trade. "Benevolent people!" he might have said, "how unbounded are your sympathies! Your unhappy brethren of Africa, differing from you only in the colour of their skins, are so dear to you, and you begrudge so little the twenty millions you have paid on their behalf, that you love to have a memento of them continually in your sight. Jim Crow is the representative of that injured race, and as such is the idol of your populace! See how they all sing his praises!—how they imitate his peculiarities!—how



they repeat his name in their moments of leisure and relaxation! They even carve images of him to adorn their hearths, that his cause and his sufferings may never be forgotten! Oh, philanthropic England!—oh, vanguard of civilization!"

Such are a few of the peculiarities of the London multitude, when no riot, no execution, no murder, no balloon, disturbs the even current of their thoughts. These are the whimsies of the mass—the harmless follies by which they unconsciously endeavour to lighten the load of care which presses upon their existence. The wise man, even though he smile at them, will not altogether withhold his sympathy, and will say, "Let them enjoy their slang phrases and their choruses if they will; and if they cannot be happy, at least let them be merry." To the Englishman, as well as to the Frenchman of whom Beranger sings, there may be some comfort in so small a thing as a song, and we may own with him that

"Au peuple attristé
Ce qui rendra la gaîté,
C'est la GAUDRIOLE!
O gué!
C'est la GAUDRIOLE!"

THE O. P. MANIA.

And these things bred a great combustion in the town.
Wagstaffe's Apparition of Mother Haggis.

The acrimonious warfare carried on for a length of time by the playgoers of London against the proprietors of Covent-Garden Theatre, is one of the most singular instances upon record of the small folly which will sometimes pervade a multitude of intelligent men. Carried on at first from mere obstinacy by a few, and afterwards for mingled obstinacy and frolic by a greater number, it increased at last to such a height, that the sober dwellers in the provinces held up their hands in astonishment, and wondered that the people of London should be such fools. As much firmness and perseverance, displayed in a better cause, might have achieved important triumphs; and we cannot but feel regret, in recording this matter, that so much good and wholesome energy should have been thrown away on so unworthy an object. But we will begin with the beginning, and trace the O. P. mania from its source.

On the night of the 20th of September, 1808, the old theatre of Covent-Garden was totally destroyed by fire. Preparations were immediately made for the erection of a more splendid edifice, and the managers, Harris and the celebrated John Philip Kemble, announced that the new theatre should be without a rival in Europe. In less than three months, the rubbish of the old building was cleared away, and the foundation-stone of the new one laid with all due ceremony by the Duke of Sussex. With so much celerity were the works carried on, that, in nine months more, the edifice was completed, both without and within. The opening

night was announced for the 18th of September, 1809, within two days of a twelvemonth since the destruction of the original building.

But the undertaking had proved more expensive than the Committee anticipated. To render the pit entrance more commodious, it had been deemed advisable to remove a low public-house that stood in the way. This turned out a matter of no little difficulty, for the proprietor was a man well skilled in driving a hard bargain. The more eager the Committee showed themselves to come to terms with him for his miserable pot-house, the more grasping he became in his demands for compensation. They were ultimately obliged to pay him an exorbitant sum. Added to this, the interior decorations were on the most costly scale; and Mrs. Siddons, and other members of the Kemble family, together with the celebrated Italian singer, Madame Catalani, had been engaged at very high salaries. As the night of opening drew near, the Committee found that they had gone a little beyond their means; and they issued a notice, stating that, in consequence of the great expense they had been at in building the theatre, and the large salaries they had agreed to pay, to secure the services of the most eminent actors, they were under the necessity of fixing the prices of admission at seven shillings to the boxes and four shillings to the pit, instead of six shillings and three and sixpence, as heretofore.

This announcement created the greatest dissatisfaction. The boxes might have borne the oppression, but the dignity of the pit was wounded. A war-cry was raised immediately. For some weeks previous to the opening, a continual clatter was kept up in clubs and coffee-rooms, against what was considered a most unconstitutional aggression on the rights of play-going man. The newspapers assiduously kept up the excitement, and represented, day after day, to the managers the impolicy of the proposed advance. The bitter politics of the time were disregarded, and Kemble and Covent-Garden became as great sources of interest as Napoleon and France. Public attention was the more fixed upon the proceedings at Covent-Garden, since it was the only patent theatre then in existence, Drury-Lane theatre having also been destroyed by fire in the month of February previous. But great as was the indignation of the lovers of the drama at that time, no

one could have anticipated the extraordinary lengths to which opposition would be carried.

First Night, September 20th.—The performances announced were the tragedy of "Macbeth," and the afterpiece of "The Quaker." The house was excessively crowded (the pit especially) with persons who had gone for no other purpose than to make a disturbance. They soon discovered another grievance to add to the list. The whole of the lower, and three-fourths of the upper tier of boxes, were let out for the season, so that those who had paid at the door for a seat in the boxes were obliged to mount to a level with the gallery. Here they were stowed into boxes which, from their size and shape, received the contemptuous, and not inappropriate, designation of pigeon-holes. This was considered in the light of a new aggression upon established rights; and long before the curtain drew up, the managers might have heard in their green-room the indignant shouts of "Down with the pigeon-holes!"—"Old prices for ever!" Amid this din the curtain rose, and Mr. Kemble stood forward to deliver a poetical address in honour of the occasion. The riot now began in earnest; not a word of the address was audible, from the stamping and groaning of the people in the pit. This continued, almost without intermission, through the five acts of the tragedy. Now and then, the sublime acting of Mrs. Siddons, as "the awful woman," hushed the noisy multitude into silence, in spite of themselves: but it was only for a moment: the recollection of their fancied wrongs made them ashamed of their admiration, and they shouted and hooted again more vigorously than before. The comedy of Munden in the afterpiece met with no better reception; not a word was listened to, and the curtain fell amid still increasing uproar and shouts of "Old prices!" Some magistrates, who happened to be present, zealously came to the rescue, and appeared on the stage with copies of the Riot Act. This ill-judged proceeding made the matter worse. The men of the pit were exasperated by the indignity, and strained their lungs to express how deeply they felt it. Thus remained the war till long after midnight, when the belligerents withdrew from sheer exhaustion.

Second Night.—The crowd was not so great; all those who had gone on the previous evening to listen to the performances, now stayed away, and the rioters had it nearly all to them-

selves. With the latter, "the play was *not* the thing," and Macheath and Polly sang in "The Beggar's Opera" in vain. The actors and the public appeared to have changed sides—the audience acted, and the actors listened. A new feature of this night's proceedings was the introduction of placards. Several were displayed from the pit and boxes, inscribed in large letters with the words, "Old prices." With a view of striking terror, the constables, who had been plentifully introduced into the house, attacked the placard-bearers, and succeeded, after several severe battles, in dragging off a few of them to the neighbouring watch-house, in Bow Street. Confusion now became worse and worse confounded. The pitites screamed themselves hoarse; while, to increase the uproar, some mischievous frequenters of the upper regions squeaked through dozens of cat-calls, till the combined noise was enough to blister every tympanum in the house.

Third Night.—The appearance of several gentlemen in the morning at the bar of the Bow Street Police-office, to answer for their riotous conduct, had been indignantly commented upon during the day. All augured ill for the quiet of the night. The performances announced were "Richard the Third" and "The Poor Soldier," but the popularity of the tragedy could not obtain it a hearing. The pitites seemed to be drawn into closer union by the attacks made upon them, and to act more in concert than on the previous nights. The placards were, also, more numerous; not only the pit, but the boxes and galleries exhibited them. Among the most conspicuous, was one inscribed, "John Bull against John Kemble.—Who'll win?" Another bore, "King George for ever! but no King Kemble." A third was levelled against Madame Catalani, whose large salary was supposed to be one of the causes of the increased prices, and was inscribed, "No foreigners to tax us—we're taxed enough already." This last was a double-barrelled one, expressing both dramatic and political discontent, and was received with loud cheers by the pitites.

The tragedy and afterpiece were concluded full two hours before their regular time; and the cries for Mr. Kemble became so loud, that the manager thought proper to obey the summons. Amid all these scenes of uproar he preserved his equanimity, and was never once betrayed into any expression

of petulance or anger. With some difficulty he obtained a hearing. He entered into a detail of the affairs of the theatre, assuring the audience at the same time of the solicitude of the proprietors to accommodate themselves to the public wish. This was received with some applause, as it was thought at first to manifest a willingness to come back to the old prices, and the pit eagerly waited for the next sentence, that was to confirm their hopes. That sentence was never uttered, for Mr. Kemble, folding his arms majestically, added, in his deep tragic voice, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I wait here to know what you want!" Immediately the uproar was renewed, and became so tremendous and so deafening, that the manager, seeing the uselessness of further parley, made his bow and retired.

A gentleman then rose in the boxes and requested a hearing. He obtained it without difficulty. He began by inveighing in severe terms against the pretended ignorance of Mr. Kemble, in asking them so offensively what they wanted, and concluded by exhorting the people never to cease their opposition until they brought down the prices to their old level. The speaker, whose name was understood to be Leigh, then requested a cheer for the actors, to show that no disrespect was intended them. The cheer was given immediately.

A barrister of the name of Smythe then rose to crave another hearing for Mr. Kemble. The manager stood forth again, calm, unmoved, and severe. "Ladies and gentlemen," said he, "I wait here to know your wishes." Mr. Leigh, who took upon himself, "for that night only," the character of popular leader, said, the only reply he could give was one in three words, "the old prices." Hereat the shouts of applause again rose, till the building rang. Still serene amid the storm, the manager endeavoured to enter into explanations. The men of the pit would hear nothing of the sort. They wanted entire and absolute acquiescence. Less would not satisfy them; and, as Mr. Kemble only wished to explain, they would not hear a word. He finally withdrew amid a noise to which Babel must have been comparatively silent.

Fourth Night.—The rioters were more obstinate than ever. The noises were increased by the addition of whistles, bugle-horns, and watchmen's rattles, sniffling, snorting, and clatter-

ing from all parts of the house. Human lungs were taxed to the uttermost, and the stamping on the floor raised such a dust as to render all objects but dimly visible. In placards, too, there was greater variety. The loose wits of the town had all day been straining their ingenuity to invent new ones. Among them were, "Come forth, O Kemble! come forth and tremble!" "Foolish John Kemble, we'll make you tremble!" and "No cats! no Catalani! English actors for ever!"

Those who wish to oppose a mob successfully, should never lose their temper. It is a proof of weakness which masses of people at once perceive, and never fail to take advantage of. Thus, when the managers unwisely resolved to fight the mob with their own weapons, it only increased the opposition it was intended to allay. A dozen pugilists, commanded by a notorious boxer of the day, were introduced into the pit, to use the *argumentum ad hominem* to the rioters. Continual scuffles ensued; but the invincible resolution of the playgoers would not allow them to quail; it rather aroused them to renewed opposition, and a determination never to submit or yield. It also strengthened their cause, by affording them further ground of complaint against the managers.

The performances announced on the bills were the opera of "Love in a Village," and "Who wins?" but the bills had it all to themselves, for neither actors nor public were much burdened with them. The latter, indeed, afforded some sport. The title was too apt to the occasion to escape notice, and shouts of "Who wins? who wins?" displaced for a time the accustomed cry of old prices.

After the fall of the curtain, Mr. Leigh, with another gentleman, again spoke, complaining bitterly of the introduction of the prize-fighters, and exhorting the public never to give in. Mr. Kemble was again called forward; but when he came, the full tide of discord ran so strongly against him that, being totally unable to stem it, he withdrew. Each man seemed to shout as if he had been a Stentor; and when his lungs were wearied, took to his feet and stamped, till all the black coats in his vicinity became gray with dust. At last the audience were tired out, and the theatre was closed before eleven o'clock.

Fifth night.—The play was Coleman's amusing comedy of "John Bull." There was no diminution of the uproar.

Every note on the diapason of discord was run through. The prize-fighters, or *hitites* as they were called, mustered in considerable numbers, and the battles between them and the *pitites* were fierce and many. It was now, for the first time, that the letters O. P. came into general use as an abbreviation of the accustomed watchword of *old prices*. Several placards were thus inscribed; and, as brevity is so desirable in shouting, the mob adopted the emendation. As usual, the manager was called for. After some delay he came forward, and was listened to with considerable patience. He repeated, in respectful terms, the great loss that would be occasioned to the proprietors by a return to the old prices, and offered to submit a statement of their accounts to the eminent lawyers, Sir Vicary Gibbs and Sir Thomas Plumer; the eminent merchants, Sir Francis Baring and Mr. Angerstein; and Mr. Whitmore, the Governor of the Bank of England. By their decision as to the possibility of carrying on the theatre at the old prices, he would consent to be governed, and he hoped the public would do the same. This reasonable proposition was scouted immediately. Not even the high and reputable names he had mentioned were thought to afford any guarantee for impartiality. The pitites were too wrong-headed to abate one iota of their pretensions; and they had been too much insulted by the prize-fighters in the manager's pay, to show any consideration for him, or agree to any terms he might propose. They wanted full acquiescence, and nothing less. Thus the conference broke off, and the manager retired amid a storm of hisses.

An Irish gentleman, named O'Reilly, then stood up in one of the boxes. With true Irish gallantry, he came to the rescue of an ill-used lady. He said he was disgusted at the attacks made upon Madame Catalani, the finest singer in the world, and a lady inestimable in private life. It was unjust, unmanly, and un-English to make the innocent suffer for the guilty; and he hoped this blot would be no longer allowed to stain a fair cause. As to the quarrel with the manager, he recommended them to persevere. They were not only wronged by his increased prices, but insulted by his boxers, and he hoped, that before they had done with him, they would teach him a lesson he would not soon forget. The gallant

Hibernian soon became a favourite, and sat down amid loud cheers.

Sixth night.—No signs of a cessation of hostilities on the one side, or of a return to the old prices on the other. The playgoers seemed to grow more united as the managers grew more obstinate. The actors had by far the best time of it; for they were spared nearly all the labour of their parts, and merely strutted on the stage to see how matters went on, and then strutted off again. Notwithstanding the remonstrance of Mr. O'Reilly on the previous night, numerous placards reflecting upon Madame Catalani were exhibited. One was inscribed with the following doggrel:—

"Seventeen thousand a-year goes pat,
To Kemble, his sister, and Madame Cat."

On another was displayed, in large letters, "No compromise, old prices, and native talent!" Some of these were stuck against the front of the boxes, and others were hoisted from the pit on long poles. The following specimens will suffice to show the spirit of them; wit they had none, or humour either, although when they were successively exhibited, they elicited roars of laughter:—

"John Kemble alone is the cause of this riot;
When he lowers his prices, John Bull will be quiet."

"John Kemble be damn'd,
We will not be cramm'd."

"Squire Kemble
Begins to tremble."

The curtain fell as early as nine o'clock, when there being loud calls for Mr. Kemble, he stood forward. He announced that Madame Catalani, against whom so unjustifiable a prejudice had been excited, had thrown up her engagement rather than stand in the way of any accommodation of existing differences. This announcement was received with great applause. Mr. Kemble then went on to vindicate himself and co-proprieters from the charge of despising public opinion. No assertion, he assured them, could be more unjust. They were sincerely anxious to bring these unhappy differences to a close, and he thought he had acted in the most fair and reasonable

appeared to give the managers more annoyance than all the rest, and the prize-fighters made vigorous attacks upon the holders of them. Several persons were, on this night, and indeed nearly every night, taken into custody, and locked up in the watchhouse. On their appearance the following morning, they were generally held to bail in considerable sums to keep the peace. This proceeding greatly augmented the animosity of the pit.

It would be useless to detail the scenes of confusion which followed night after night. For about three weeks the war continued with unabated fury. Its characteristics were nearly always the same. Invention was racked to discover new noises, and it was thought a happy idea when one fellow got into the gallery with a dustman's bell, and rang it furiously. Dogs were also brought into the boxes, to add their sweet voices to the general uproar. The animals seemed to join in it *con amore*, and one night a large mastiff growled and barked so loudly, as to draw down upon his exertions three cheers from the gratified pitites.

So strong did the popular enthusiasm run in favour of the row, that well-dressed ladies appeared in the boxes with the letters O. P. on their bonnets. O. P. hats for the gentlemen were still more common, and some were so zealous in the cause as to sport waistcoats with an O embroidered upon one flap, and a P on the other. O. P. toothpicks were also in fashion; and gentlemen and ladies carried O. P. handkerchiefs, which they waved triumphantly whenever the row was unusually deafening. The latter suggested the idea of O. P. flags, which were occasionally unfurled from the gallery to the length of a dozen feet. Sometimes the first part of the night's performances were listened to with comparative patience, a majority of the manager's friends being in possession of the house. But as soon as the half-price commenced, the row began again in all its pristine glory. At the fall of the curtain it soon became customary to sing "God save the King," the whole of the O. P.'s joining in loyal chorus. Sometimes this was followed by "Rule Britannia;" and, on two or three occasions, by a parody of the national anthem, which excited great laughter. A verse may not be uninteresting as a specimen.

"O Johnny Bull, be true,
Confound the prices new,
And make them fall!
Curse Kemble's politics,
Frustrate his knavish tricks,
On thee our hopes we fix,
T' upset them all!"

This done, they scrambled over the benches, got up sham fights in the pit, or danced the famous O. P. dance. The latter may as well be described here: half a dozen or a dozen fellows formed in a ring, and stamped alternately with the right and left foot, calling out at regular intervals, O. P.—O. P. with a drawling and monotonous sound. This uniformly lasted till the lights were put out, when the rioters withdrew, generally in gangs of ten or twenty, to defend themselves from sudden attacks on the part of the constables.

An idea seemed about this time to break in upon them, that notwithstanding the annoyance they caused the manager, they were aiding to fill his coffers. This was hinted at in some of the newspapers, and the consequence was, that many stayed away to punish him, if possible, under the silent system. But this did not last long. The love of mischief was as great an incentive to many of them as enmity to the new prices. Accidental circumstances also contributed to disturb the temporary calm. At the Westminster quarter-sessions, on the 27th of October, bills of indictment were preferred against forty-one persons for creating a disturbance and interrupting the performances of the theatre. The grand jury ignored twenty-seven of the bills, left two undecided, and found true bills against twelve. The latter exercised their right of traverse till the ensuing sessions. The preferment of these bills had the effect of re-awakening the subsiding excitement. Another circumstance about the same time gave a still greater impetus to it, and furnished the rioters with a chief, round whom they were eager to rally. Mr. Clifford, a barrister, appeared in the pit on the night of the 31st of October, with the letters O. P. on his hat. Being a man of some note, he was pounced upon by the constables, and led off to Bow Street police office, where Brandon, the box-keeper, charged him with riotous and disorderly conduct. This was exactly what Clifford wanted. He told the presiding magistrate, a Mr. Read, that he had purposely displayed the letters

on his hat, in order that the question of right might be determined before a competent tribunal. He denied that he had committed any offence, and seemed to manifest so intimate an acquaintance with the law upon the subject, that the magistrate, convinced by his reasoning, ordered his immediate dismissal, and stated that he had been taken into custody without the slightest grounds. The result was made known in the theatre a few minutes afterwards, where Mr. Clifford, on his appearance victorious, was received with reiterated huzzas. On his leaving the house, he was greeted by a mob of five or six hundred persons, who had congregated outside to do him honour as he passed. From that night the riots may be said to have recommenced, and "Clifford and O. P." became the rallying cry of the party. The officious box-keeper became at the same time the object of the popular dislike, and the contempt with which the genius and fine qualities of Mr. Kemble would not permit them to regard him, was fastened upon his underling. So much ill-feeling was directed towards the latter, that at this time a return to the old prices, unaccompanied by his dismissal, would not have made the manager's peace with the pitites.

In the course of the few succeeding weeks, during which the riots continued with undiminished fury, O. P. medals were struck, and worn in great numbers in the theatre. A few of the ultra-zealous even wore them in the streets. A new fashion also came into favour for hats, waistcoats, and handkerchiefs, on which the mark, instead of the separate letters O and P, was a large O, with a small P in the middle of it: thus,

The managers, seeing that Mr. Clifford was so identified with the rioters, determined to make him responsible. An action was accordingly brought against him and other defendants in the Court of King's Bench. On the 20th of November, the Attorney-General moved, before Lord Ellenborough, for a rule to show cause why a criminal information should not be filed against Clifford for unlawfully conspiring with certain others to intimidate the proprietors of Covent-Garden Theatre,

and force them, to their loss and detriment, to lower their prices of admission. The rule was granted, and an early day fixed for the trial. In the mean time, these proceedings kept up the acerbity of the O. P.'s, and every night at the fall of the curtain, three groans were given for John Kemble and three cheers for John Bull.

It was during this year that the national Jubilee was celebrated, in honour of the fiftieth year of the reign of George III. When the riots had reached their fiftieth night, the O. P.'s also determined to have a jubilee. All their previous efforts in the way of roaring, great as they were, were this night outdone, and would have continued long after "the wee short hour," had not the managers wisely put the extinguisher upon them and the lights about eleven o'clock.

Pending the criminal prosecution against himself, Mr. Clifford brought an action for false imprisonment against Brandon. The cause was fixed for trial in the Court of Common Pleas, on the 5th of December, before Lord Chief-Justice Mansfield. From an early hour in the morning all the avenues leading to the court were thronged with an eager multitude; all London was in anxiety for the result. So dense was the crowd, that counsel found the greatest difficulty in making their way into court. Mr. Sergeant Best was retained on the part of the plaintiff, and Mr. Sergeant Shepherd for the defence. The defendant put two pleas upon the record; first, that he was not guilty, and secondly, that he was justified. Sergeant Best, in stating the plaintiff's case, blamed the managers for all the disturbances that had taken place, and contended that his client, in affixing the letters O. P. to his hat, was not guilty of any offence. Even if he had joined in the noises, which he had not, his so doing would not subject him to the penalties for rioting. Several witnesses were then called to prove the capture of Mr. Clifford, the hearing of the case before the magistrate at Bow Street, and his ultimate dismissal. Sergeant Shepherd was heard at great length on the other side, and contended that his client was perfectly justified in taking into custody a man who was inciting others to commit a breach of the peace.

The Lord Chief-Justice summed up, with an evident bias in favour of the defendant. He said an undue apprehension of the rights of an audience had got abroad. Even supposing

the object of the rioters to be fair and legal, they were not authorized to carry it by unfair means. In order to constitute a riot, it was not necessary that personal violence should be committed, and it seemed to him that the defendant had not acted in an improper manner in giving into custody a person who, by the display of a symbol, was encouraging others to commit a riot.

The jury retired to consider their verdict. The crowd without and within the court awaited the result in feverish suspense. Half an hour elapsed, when the jury returned with a verdict for the plaintiff—Damages, five pounds. The satisfaction of the spectators was evident upon their countenances; that of the judge expressed the contrary feeling. Turning to the foreman of the jury, his Lordship asked upon which of the two points referred to them, namely, the broad question, whether a riot had been committed, and, if committed, whether the plaintiff had participated in it, they had found their verdict?

The foreman stated, that they were all of opinion generally that the plaintiff had been illegally arrested. This vague answer did not satisfy his Lordship, and he repeated his question. He could not, however, obtain a more satisfactory reply. Evidently vexed at what he deemed the obtuseness or partiality of the jury, he turned to the bar, and said, that a spirit of a mischievous and destructive nature was abroad, which, if not repressed, threatened awful consequences. The country would be lost, he said, and the government overturned, if such a spirit were encouraged; it was impossible it could end in good. Time, the destroyer and fulfiller of predictions, has proved that his Lordship was a false prophet. The harmless O. P. war has been productive of no such dire results.

It was to be expected that after this triumph, the war in the pit would rage with redoubled acrimony. A riot beginning at half-price would not satisfy the excited feelings of the O. P.'s on the night of such a victory. Long before the curtain drew up, the house was filled with them, and several placards were exhibited, which the constables and friends of the managers strove, as usual, to tear into shreds. One of them, which met this fate was inscribed, "Success to O. P! A British jury for ever!" It was soon replaced by another of a similar

purport. It is needless to detail the uproar that ensued; the jumping, the fighting, the roaring, and the howling. For nine nights more the same system was continued; but the end was at hand.

On the 14th, a grand dinner was given at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, to celebrate the victory of Mr. Clifford. "The reprobators of managerial insolence," as they called themselves, attended in considerable numbers, and Mr. Clifford was voted to the chair. The cloth had been removed, and a few speeches made, when the company were surprised by a message that their arch-enemy himself solicited the honour of an audience. It was some time ere they could believe that Mr. Kemble had ventured to such a place. After some parley the manager was admitted, and a conference was held. A treaty was ultimately signed and sealed, which put an end to the long-contested wars of O. P., and restored peace to the drama.

All this time the disturbance proceeded at the theatre with its usual spirit. It was now the sixty-sixth night of its continuance, and the rioters were still untired—still determined to resist to the last. In the midst of it a gentleman arrived from the Crown and Anchor, and announced to the pit that Mr. Kemble had attended the dinner, and had yielded at last to the demand of the public. He stated, that it had been agreed upon between him and the Committee for defending the persons under prosecution, that the boxes should remain at the advanced price; that the pit should be reduced to three shillings and sixpence; that the private boxes should be done away with; and that all prosecutions, on both sides, should be immediately stayed. This announcement was received with deafening cheers. As soon as the first burst of enthusiasm was over, the O. P.'s became anxious for a confirmation of the intelligence, and commenced a loud call for Mr. Kemble. He had not then returned from the Crown and Anchor; but of this the pitites were not aware, and for nearly half an hour they kept up a most excruciating din. At length the great actor made his appearance, in his walking dress, with his cane in hand, as he had left the tavern. It was a long time before he could obtain silence. He apologized in the most respectful terms for appearing before them in such unbecoming costume, which was caused solely by his ignorance that

he should have to appear before them that night. After announcing, as well as occasional interruptions would allow, the terms that had been agreed upon, he added, "In order that no trace or recollection of the past differences, which had unhappily prevailed so long, should remain, he was instructed by the proprietors to say, that they most sincerely lamented the course that had been pursued, and engaged that, on their parts, all legal proceedings should forthwith be put a stop to." The cheering which greeted this speech was interrupted at the close by loud cries from the pit of "Dismiss Brandon," while one or two exclaimed, "We want old prices generally,—six shillings for the boxes." After an ineffectual attempt to address them again upon this point, Mr. Kemble made respectful and repeated obeisances, and withdrew. The noises still continued, until Munden stood forward, leading by the hand the humbled box-keeper, contrition in his looks, and in his hands a written apology, which he endeavoured to read. The uproar was increased threefold by his presence, and, amid cries of "We won't hear him!" "Where's his master?" he was obliged to retire. Mr. Harris, the son of Kemble's co-manager, afterwards endeavoured to propitiate the audience in his favour; but it was of no avail; nothing less than his dismissal would satisfy the offended majesty of the pit. Amid this uproar the curtain finally fell, and the O. P. dance was danced for the last time within the walls of Covent Garden.

On the following night it was announced that Brandon had resigned his situation. This turned the tide of popular ill-will. The performances were "The Wheel of Fortune," and an afterpiece. The house was crowded to excess; a desire to be pleased was manifest on every countenance, and when Mr. Kemble, who took his favourite character of Penruddock, appeared upon the stage, he was greeted with the most vehement applause. The noises ceased entirely, and the symbols of opposition disappeared. The audience, hushed into attention, gave vent to no sounds but those of admiration for the genius of the actor. When, in the course of his part, he repeated the words, "So! I am in London again!" the aptness of the expression to the circumstances of the night, was felt by all present, and acknowledged by a round of boisterous and thrice repeated cheering. It was a triumphant scene for Mr. Kemble after his long annoyances. He had achieved a

double victory. He had, not only as a manager, soothed the obstinate opposition of the play-goers, but as an actor he had forced from one of the largest audiences he had ever beheld, approbation more cordial and unanimous than he had ever enjoyed before. The popular favour not only turned towards him; it embraced everybody connected with the theatre, except the poor victim, Brandon. Most of the favourite actors were called before the curtain to make their bow, and receive the acclamations of the pit. At the close of the performances, a few individuals, implacable and stubborn, got up a feeble cry of "Old prices for the boxes;" but they were quickly silenced by the reiterated cheers of the majority, or by cries of "Turn them out!" A placard, the last of its race, was at the same time exhibited in the front of the pit, bearing, in large letters, the words "We are satisfied."

Thus ended the famous wars of O. P., which, for a period of nearly three months, had kept the metropolis in an uproar. And after all, what was the grand result? As if the whole proceeding had been a parody upon the more destructive, but scarcely more sensible wars recorded in history, it was commenced in injustice, carried on in bitterness of spirit, and ended, like the labour of the mountain, in a mouse. The abatement of sixpence in the price of admission to the pit, and the dismissal of an unfortunate servant, whose only fault was too much zeal in the service of his employers,—such were the grand victories of the O. P.'s.

THE THUGS, OR PHANSIGARS.

Orribili favelle—parole di dolor.—DANTE.

AMONG the black deeds which superstition has imposed as duties upon her wretched votaries, none are more horrible than the practices of the murderers, who, under the name of Thugs, or Phansigars, have so long been the scourge of India. For ages they have pursued their dark and dreadful calling, moulding assassination into a science, or extolling it as a virtue, worthy only to be practised by a race favoured of Heaven. Of late years this atrocious delusion has excited much attention, both in this country and in India; an attention which, it is to be hoped, will speedily lead to the uprooting of a doctrine so revolting and anti-human. Although the British Government has extended over Hindostan for so long a period, it does not appear that Europeans even suspected the existence of this mysterious sect until the commencement of the present century. In the year 1807, a gang of Thugs, laden with the plunder of murdered travellers, was accidentally discovered. The inquiries then set on foot revealed to the astonished Government a system of iniquity unparalleled in the history of man. Subsequent investigation extended the knowledge; and by throwing light upon the peculiar habits of the murderers, explained the reason why their crimes had remained so long undiscovered. In the following pages will be found an epitome of all the information which has reached Europe concerning them, derived principally from Dr. Sherwood's treatise upon the subject, published in 1816, and the still more valuable and more recent work of Mr. Sleeman, entitled the "Ramaseeana; or, Vocabulary of the peculiar Language of the Thugs."

The followers of this sect are called Thugs, or T'hugs, and their profession Thuggee. In the south of India they are called Phansigars: the former word signifying "a deceiver;" and the latter, "a strangler." They are both singularly appropriate. The profession of Thuggee is hereditary, and embraces, it is supposed, in every part of India, a body of at least ten thousand individuals, trained to murder from their childhood; carrying it on in secret and in silence, yet glorying in it, and holding the practice of it higher than any earthly honour. During the winter months, they usually follow some reputable calling, to elude suspicion; and in the summer, they set out in gangs over all the roads of India, to plunder and destroy. These gangs generally contain from ten to forty Thugs, and sometimes as many as two hundred. Each strangler is provided with a noose, to despatch the unfortunate victim, as the Thugs make it a point never to cause death by any other means. When the gangs are very large, they divide into smaller bodies; and each taking a different route, they arrive at the same general place of rendezvous to divide the spoil. They sometimes travel in the disguise of respectable traders; sometimes as sepoys or native soldiers; and at others, as government officers. If they chance to fall in with an unprotected wayfarer, his fate is certain. One Thug approaches him from behind, and throws the end of a sash round his neck; the other end is seized by a second the same instant, crossed behind the neck, and drawn tightly, while with their other hand the two Thugs thrust his head forward to expedite the strangulation: a third Thug seizes the traveller by the legs at the same moment, and he is thrown to the ground, a corpse before he reaches it.

But solitary travellers are not the prey they are anxious to seek. A wealthy caravan of forty or fifty individuals has not unfrequently been destroyed by them; not one soul being permitted to escape. Indeed, there is hardly an instance upon record of any one's escape from their hands, so surely are their measures taken, and so well do they calculate beforehand all the risks and difficulties of the undertaking. Each individual of the gang has his peculiar duty allotted to him. Upon approaching a town, or *serai*, two or three, known as the *soothaes*, or "inveiglers," are sent in advance to ascertain if any travellers are there; to learn, if possible,

the amount of money or merchandize they carry with them, their hours of starting in the morning, or any other particulars that may be of use. If they can, they enter into conversation with them, pretend to be travelling to the same place, and propose, for mutual security, to travel with them. This intelligence is duly communicated to the remainder of the gang. The place usually chosen for the murder is some lonely part of the road in the vicinity of a jungle, and the time, just before dusk. At given signals, understood only by themselves, the scouts of the party station themselves in the front, in the rear, and on each side, to guard against surprise. A strangler and assistant strangler, called Bhurtote and Shamshea, place themselves, the one on the right, and the other on the left of the victim, without exciting his suspicion. At another signal the noose is twisted, drawn tightly by a strong hand at each extremity; and the traveller, in a few seconds, hurried into eternity. Ten, twelve, twenty, and in some instances, sixty persons have been thus despatched at the same moment. Should any victim, by a rare chance, escape their hands, he falls into those of the scouts who are stationed within hearing, who run upon him and soon overpower him.

Their next care is to dispose of the bodies, So cautious are they to prevent detection, that they usually break all the joints to hasten decomposition. They then cut open the body to prevent its swelling in the grave and causing fissures in the soil above, by which means the jackals might be attracted to the spot, and thereby lead to discovery. When obliged to bury the body in a frequented district, they kindle a fire over the grave to obliterate the traces of the newly turned earth. Sometimes the grave-diggers of the party, whose office, like that of all the rest, is hereditary, are despatched to make the graves in the morning at some distant spot, by which it is known the travellers will pass. The stranglers, in the mean time, journey quietly with their victims, conversing with them in the most friendly manner. Towards nightfall they approach the spot selected for their murder; the signal is given, and they fall into the graves that have been ready for them since day-break. On one occasion, related by Captain Sleeman, a party of fifty-nine people, consisting of fifty-two men and seven women, were

thus simultaneously strangled, and thrown into the graves prepared for them in the morning. Some of these travellers were on horseback and well armed, but the Thugs, who appear to have been upwards of two hundred in a gang, had provided against all risk of failure. The only one left alive of all that numerous party, was an infant four years old, who was afterwards initiated into all the mysteries of Thuggee.

If they cannot find a convenient opportunity for disposing of the bodies, they carry them for many miles, until they come to a spot secure from intrusion, and to a soil adapted to receive them. If fear of putrefaction admonishes them to use despatch, they set up a large screen or tent, as other travellers do, and bury the body within the enclosure, pretending, if inquiries are made, that their women are within. But this only happens when they fall in with a victim unexpectedly. In murders which they have planned previously, the finding of a place of sepulture is never left to hazard.

Travellers who have the misfortune to lodge in the same *choultry* or hostelry, as the Thugs, are often murdered during the night. It is either against their creed to destroy a sleeper, or they find a difficulty in placing the noose round the neck of a person in a recumbent position. When this is the case, the slumberer is suddenly aroused by the alarm of a snake or a scorpion. He starts to his feet, and finds the fatal sash around his neck.—He never escapes.

In addition to these Thugs who frequent the highways, there are others, who infest the rivers, and are called Pungoos. They do not differ in creed, but only in a few of their customs, from their brethren on shore. They go up and down the rivers in their own boats, pretending to be travellers of consequence, or pilgrims, proceeding to, or returning from Benares, Allahabad, or other sacred places. The boatmen, who are also Thugs, are not different in appearance from the ordinary boatmen on the river. The artifices used to entice victims on board are precisely similar to those employed by the highway Thugs. They send out their "inveiglers" to scrape acquaintance with travellers, and find out the direction in which they are journeying. They always pretend to be bound for the same place, and vaunt the superior accommodation of the boat by which they are going. The travellers fall into the snare, are led to the Thug captain, who very

often, to allay suspicion, demurs to take them, but eventually agrees for a moderate sum. The boat strikes off into the middle of the stream; the victims are amused and kept in conversation for hours by their insidious foes, until three raps are given on the deck above. This is a signal from the Thugs on the look-out that the coast is clear. In an instant the fatal noose is ready, and the travellers are no more. The bodies are then thrown, warm and palpitating, into the river from a hole in the side of the boat, contrived expressly for the purpose.

A river Thug, who was apprehended, turned approver, to save his own life, and gave the following evidence relative to the practices of his fraternity:—"We embarked at Rajmahul. The travellers sat on one side of the boat, and the Thugs on the other; while we three (himself and two "stranglers"), were placed in the stern, the Thugs on our left, and the travellers on our right. Some of the Thugs, dressed as boatmen, were above deck, and others walking along the bank of the river, and pulling the boat by the joon, or rope, and all, at the same time, on the look-out. We came up with a gentleman's pinnace and two baggage-boats, and were obliged to stop and let them go on. The travellers seemed anxious; but were quieted by being told that the men at the rope were tired, and must take some refreshment. They pulled out something, and began to eat; and when the pinnace had got on a good way, they resumed their work, and our boat proceeded. It was now afternoon; and, when a signal was given above, that all was clear, the five Thugs who sat opposite the travellers sprang in upon them, and, with the aid of others, strangled them. Having done this, they broke their spinal bones, and then threw them out of a hole made at the side, into the river, and kept on their course; the boat being all this time pulled along by the men on the bank."

That such atrocities as these should have been carried on for nearly two centuries without exciting the attention of the British Government, seems incredible. But our wonder will be diminished when we reflect upon the extreme caution of the Thugs, and the ordinary dangers of travelling in India. The Thugs never murder a man near his own home, and they never dispose of their booty near the scene of murder. They also pay, in common with other and less atrocious robbers, a portion of their gains to the Polygars, or native authorities of

the districts in which they reside, to secure protection. The friends and relatives of the victims, perhaps a thousand miles off, never surmise their fate till a period has elapsed when all inquiry would be fruitless, or, at least, extremely difficult. They have no clue to the assassins, and very often impute to the wild beasts of the jungles the slaughter committed by that wilder beast, man.

There are several gradations through which every member of the fraternity must regularly pass before he arrives at the high office of a Bhurtote, or strangler. He is first employed as a scout—then as a sexton—then as a Shumseea, or holder of hands, and lastly as a Bhurtote. When a man who is not of Thug lineage, or who has not been brought up from his infancy among them, wishes to become a strangler, he solicits the oldest, and most pious and experienced Thug, to take him under his protection and make him his disciple; and under his guidance he is regularly initiated. When he has acquired sufficient experience in the lower ranks of the profession, he applies to his *Gooroo*, or preceptor, to give the finishing grace to his education, and make a strangler of him. An opportunity is found when a solitary traveller is to be murdered; and the tyro, with his preceptor, having seen that the proposed victim is asleep, and in safe keeping till their return, proceed to a neighbouring field and perform several religious ceremonies, accompanied by three or four of the oldest and steadiest members of the gang. The Gooroo first offers up a prayer to the goddess, saying, "Oh, Kalee! Kun-kalee! Bhud-kalee! Oh, Kalee! Maha-kalee! Calkutta Walee! if it seems fit to thee that the traveller now at our lodging should die by the hands of this thy slave, vouchsafe us thy good omen." They then sit down and watch for the good omen; and if they receive it within half an hour, conclude that their goddess is favourable to the claims of the new candidate for admission. If they have a bad omen, or no omen at all, some other Thug must put the traveller to death, and the aspirant must wait a more favourable opportunity, purifying himself in the mean time by prayer and humiliation for the favour of the goddess. If the good omen has been obtained, they return to their quarters; and the Gooroo takes a handkerchief and, turning his face to the west, ties a knot at one end of it, inserting a rupee, or other piece of silver. This knot is called the *goor*

khat, or holy knot, and no man who has not been properly ordained is allowed to tie it. The aspirant receives it reverently in his right hand from his Gooroo, and stands over the sleeping victim, with a Shumseea, or holder of hands, at his side. The traveller is aroused, the handkerchief is passed around his neck, and, at a signal from the Gooroo, is drawn tight till the victim is strangled; the Shumseea holding his hands to prevent his making any resistance. The work being now completed, the Bhurtote (no longer an aspirant, but an admitted member) bows down reverently in the dust before his Gooroo, and touches his feet with both his hands, and afterwards performs the same respect to his relatives and friends who have assembled to witness the solemn ceremony. He then waits for another favourable omen, when he unties the knot and takes out the rupee, which he gives to his Gooroo, with any other silver which he may have about him. The Gooroo adds some of his own money, with which he purchases what they call goor, or consecrated sugar, when a solemn sacrifice is performed, to which all the gang are invited. The relationship between the Gooroo and his disciple is accounted the most holy that can be formed, and subsists to the latest period of life. A Thug may betray his father, but never his Gooroo.

Dark and forbidding as is the picture already drawn, it will become still darker and more repulsive, when we consider the motives which prompt these men to systematic murder. Horrible as their practices would be, if love of plunder alone incited them, it is infinitely more horrible to reflect that the idea of duty and religion is joined to the hope of gain, in making them the scourges of their fellows. If plunder were their sole object, there would be reason to hope, that when a member of the brotherhood grew rich, he would rest from his infernal toils; but the dismal superstition which he cherishes tells him never to desist. He was sent into the world to be a slayer of men, and he religiously works out his destiny. As religiously he educates his children to pursue the same career, instilling into their minds, at the earliest age, that Thuggee is the noblest profession a man can follow, and that the dark goddess they worship will always provide rich travellers for her zealous devotees.

The following is the wild and startling legend upon which

the Thugs found the divine origin of their sect. They believe that, in the earliest ages of the world, a gigantic demon infested the earth, and devoured mankind as soon as they were created. He was of so tall a stature, that when he strode through the most unfathomable depths of the great sea, the waves, even in tempest, could not reach above his middle. His insatiable appetite for human flesh almost unpeopled the world, until Bhawanee, Kalee, or Davee, the goddess of the Thugs, determined to save mankind by the destruction of the monster. Nerving herself for the encounter, she armed herself with an immense sword; and, meeting with the demon, she ran him through the body. His blood flowed in torrents as he fell dead at her feet; but from every drop there sprang up another monster, as rapacious and as terrible as the first. Again the goddess upraised her massive sword, and hewed down the hellish brood by hundreds; but the more she slew, the more numerous they became. Every drop of their blood generated a demon; and, although the goddess endeavoured to lap up the blood ere it sprang into life, they increased upon her so rapidly, that the labour of killing became too great for endurance. The perspiration rolled down her arms in large drops, and she was compelled to think of some other mode of exterminating them. In this emergency, she created two men out of the perspiration of her body, to whom she confided the holy task of delivering the earth from the monsters. To each of the men she gave a handkerchief, and showed them how to kill without shedding blood. From her they learned to tie the fatal noose; and they became, under her tuition, such expert stranglers, that, in a very short space of time, the race of demons became extinct.

When there were no more to slay, the two men sought the great goddess, in order to return the handkerchiefs. The grateful Bhawanee desired that they would retain them, as memorials of their heroic deeds; and in order that they might never lose the dexterity that they had acquired in using them, she commanded that, from thenceforward, they should strangle men. These were the two first Thugs, and from them the whole race have descended. To the early Thugs the goddess was more direct in her favours, than she has been to their successors. At first, she undertook to bury the bodies of all the men they slew and plundered, upon the condition

that they should never look back to see what she was doing. The command was religiously observed for many ages, and the Thugs relied with implicit faith upon the promise of Bhawanee; but as men became more corrupt, the ungovernable curiosity of a young Thug offended the goddess, and led to the withdrawal of a portion of her favour. This youth, burning with a desire to see how she made her graves, looked back, and beheld her in the act, not of burying, but of devouring, the body of a man just strangled. Half of the still palpitating remains was dangling over her lips. She was so highly displeased that she condemned the Thugs, from that time forward, to bury their victims themselves. Another account states that the goddess was merely tossing the body in the air; and that, being naked, her anger was aggravated by the gaze of mortal eyes upon her charms. Before taking a final leave of her devotees, she presented them with one of her teeth for a pickaxe, one of her ribs for a knife, and the hem of her garment for a noose. She has not since appeared to human eyes.

The original tooth having been lost in the lapse of ages, new pickaxes have been constructed, with great care and many ceremonies, by each considerable gang of Thugs, to be used in making the graves of strangled travellers. The pickaxe is looked upon with the utmost veneration by the tribe. A short account of the process of making it, and the rites performed, may be interesting, as showing still further their gloomy superstition. In the first place, it is necessary to fix upon a lucky day. The chief Thug then instructs a smith to forge the holy instrument: no other eye is permitted to see the operation. The smith must engage in no other occupation until it is completed, and the chief Thug never quits his side during the process. When the instrument is formed, it becomes necessary to consecrate it to the especial service of Bhawanee. Another lucky day is chosen for this ceremony, care being had in the mean time that the shadow of no earthly thing fall upon the pickaxe, as its efficacy would be for ever destroyed. A learned Thug then sits down; and turning his face to the west, receives the pickaxe in a brass dish. After muttering some incantation, he throws it into a pit already prepared for it, where it is washed in clear water. It is then taken out, and washed again three times; the first

time in sugar and water, the second in sour milk, and the third in spirits. It is then dried, and marked from the head to the point with seven red spots. This is the first part of the ceremony: the second consists in its purification by fire. The pickaxe is again placed upon the brass dish, along with a cocoa-nut, some sugar, cloves, white sandal-wood, and other articles. A fire of the mango tree, mixed with dried cow-dung, is then kindled; and the officiating Thug, taking the pickaxe with both hands, passes it seven times through the flames.

It now remains to be ascertained whether the goddess is favourable to her followers. For this purpose, the cocoa-nut is taken from the dish and placed upon the ground. The officiating Thug, turning to the spectators, and holding the axe uplifted, asks, "Shall I strike?" Assent being given, he strikes the nut with the butt end of the axe, exclaiming, "All hail! mighty Davee! great mother of us all!" The spectators respond, "All hail! mighty Davee! and prosper thy children, the Thugs!"

If the nut is severed at the first blow, the goddess is favourable; if not, she is unpropitious: all their labour is thrown away, and the ceremony must be repeated upon some more fitting occasion. But if the sign be favourable, the axe is tied carefully in a white cloth and turned towards the west, all the spectators prostrating themselves before it. It is then buried in the earth, with its point turned in the direction the gang wishes to take on their approaching expedition. If the goddess desires to warn them that they will be unsuccessful, or that they have not chosen the right track, the Thugs believe that the point of the axe will veer round, and point to the better way. During an expedition, it is entrusted to the most prudent and exemplary Thug of the party; it is his care to hold it fast. If by any chance he should let it fall, consternation spreads through the gang: the goddess is thought to be offended; the enterprise is at once abandoned; and the Thugs return home in humiliation and sorrow, to sacrifice to their gloomy deity, and win back her estranged favour. So great is the reverence in which they hold the sacred axe, that a Thug will never break an oath that he has taken upon it. He fears that, should he perjure himself, his neck would be so twisted by the offended Bhawanee as to make his face turn to

his back; and that, in the course of a few days, he would expire in the most excruciating agonies.

The Thugs are diligent observers of signs and omens. No expedition is ever undertaken before the auspices are solemnly taken. Upon this subject Captain Sleeman says, "Even the most sensible approvers, who have been with me for many years, as well Hindoos as Mussulmans, believe that their good or ill success depended upon the skill with which the omens were discovered and interpreted, and the strictness with which they were observed and obeyed. One of the old Sindouse stock told me, in presence of twelve others, from Hydrabad, Behar, the Dooab, Oude, Rajpootana, and Bundelcund, that, had they not attended to these omens, they never could have thrived as they did. In ordinary cases of murder, other men seldom escaped punishment, while they and their families had, for ten generations, thrived, although they had murdered hundreds of people. 'This,' said the Thug, 'could never have been the case had we not attended to omens, and had not omens been intended for us. There were always signs around us to guide us to a rich booty, and warn us of danger, had we been always wise enough to discern them and religious enough to attend to them.' Every Thug present concurred with him from his soul."

A Thug, of polished manners and great eloquence, being asked by a native gentleman, in the presence of Captain Sleeman, whether he never felt compunction in murdering innocent people, replied with a smile that he did not. "Does any man," said he, "feel compunction in following his trade? and are not all our trades assigned us by Providence?" He was then asked how many people he had killed with his own hands in the course of his life? "I have killed none," was the reply. "What! and have you not been describing a number of murders in which you were concerned?" "True; but do you suppose that I committed them? Is any man killed by man's killing? Is it not the hand of God that kills, and are we not the mere instruments in the hands of God?"

Upon another occasion, Sahib, an approver, being asked if he had never felt any pity or compunction at murdering old men or young children, or persons with whom he had sat and conversed, and who had told him, perchance, of their private affairs—their hopes and their fears, their wives and their

little ones? replied unhesitatingly that he never did. From the time that the omens were favourable, the Thugs considered all the travellers they met as victims thrown into their hands by their divinity to be killed. The Thugs were the mere instruments in the hands of Bhawanee to destroy them. "If we did not kill them," said Sahib, "the goddess would never again be propitious to us, and we and our families would be involved in misery and want. If we see or hear a bad omen, it is the order of the goddess not to kill the travellers we are in pursuit of, and we dare not disobey."

As soon as an expedition has been planned, the goddess is consulted. On the day chosen for starting, which is never during the unlucky months of July, September, and December, nor on a Wednesday or Thursday, the chief Thug of the party fills a brass jug with water, which he carries in his right hand by his side. With his left, he holds upon his breast the sacred pickaxe, wrapped carefully in a white cloth, along with five knots of turmeric, two copper, and one silver coin. He then moves slowly on, followed by the whole of the gang, to some field or retired place, where halting, with his countenance turned in the direction they wish to pursue, he lifts up his eyes to heaven, saying, "Great goddess! universal mother! if this, our meditated expedition, be fitting in thy sight, vouchsafe to help us, and give us the signs of thy approbation." All the Thugs present solemnly repeat the prayer after their leader, and wait in silence for the omen. If within half an hour they see *Pilhaoo*, or good omen on the left, it signifies that the goddess has taken them by the left hand to lead them on; if they see the *Thibaoo*, or omen on the right, it signifies that she has taken them by the right hand also. The leader then places the brazen pitcher on the ground and sits down beside it, with his face turned in the same direction for seven hours, during which time his followers make all the necessary preparations for the journey. If, during this interval, no unfavourable signs are observed, the expedition advances slowly, until it arrives at the bank of the nearest stream, when they all sit down and eat of the goor, or consecrated sugar. Any evil omens that are perceived after this ceremony may be averted by sacrifices; but any evil omens before, would at once put an end to the expedition.

Among the evil omens are the following:—If the brazen

pitcher drops from the hand of the Jemadar or leader, it threatens great evil either to him or to the gang—sometimes to both. If they meet a funeral procession, a blind man, a lame man, an oil-vender, a carpenter, a potter, or a dancing-master, the expedition will be dangerous. In like manner it is unlucky to sneeze, to meet a woman with an empty pail, a couple of jackals, or a hare. The crossing of their path by the latter is considered peculiarly inauspicious. Its cry at night on the left is sometimes a good omen, but if they hear it on the right, it is very bad; a warning sent to them from Bhawanee that there is danger if they kill. Should they disregard this warning, and led on by the hope of gain, strangle any traveller, they would either find no booty on him, or such booty as would eventually lead to the ruin and dispersion of the gang. Bhawanee would be wroth with her children; and causing them to perish in the jungle, would send the hares to drink water out of their skulls.

The good omens are quite as numerous as the evil. It promises a fortunate expedition, if, on the first day, they pass through a village where there is a fair. It is also deemed fortunate, if they hear wailing for the dead in any village but their own. To meet a woman with a pitcher full of water upon her head, bodes a prosperous journey and a safe return. The omen is still more favourable if she be in a state of pregnancy. It is said of the Thugs of the Jumaldehee and Lodahaa tribes, that they always make the youngest Thug of the party kick the body of the first person they strangle, five times on the back, thinking that it will bring them good luck. This practice, however, is not general. If they hear an ass bray on the left at the commencement of an expedition, and another soon afterwards on the right, they believe that they shall be supereminently successful, that they shall strangle a multitude of travellers, and find great booty.

After every murder a solemn sacrifice, called the Tuponee, is performed by all the gang. The goor, or consecrated sugar, is placed upon a large cloth or blanket, which is spread upon the grass. Beside it is deposited the sacred pickaxe, and a piece of silver for an offering. The Jemadar, or chief of the party, together with the oldest and most prudent Thugs, take their places upon the cloth, and turn their faces to the west. Those inferior Thugs who cannot find room upon the

privileged cloth, sit round as close to it as possible. A pit is then dug, into which the Jemadar pours a small quantity of the goor, praying at the same time that the goddess will always reward her followers with abundant spoils. All the Thugs repeat the prayer after him. He then sprinkles water upon the pickaxe, and puts a little of the goor upon the head of every one who has obtained a seat beside him on the cloth. A short pause ensues, when the signal for strangling is given, as if a murder were actually about to be committed, and each Thug eats his goor in solemn silence. So powerful is the impression made upon their imagination by this ceremony, that it almost drives them frantic with enthusiasm. Captain Sleeman relates, that when he reproached a Thug for his share in a murder of great atrocity, and asked him whether he never felt pity, the man replied, "We all feel pity sometimes; but the goor of the Tuponee changes our nature; it would change the nature of a horse. Let any man once taste of that goor, and he will be a Thug, though he know all the trades and have all the wealth in the world. I never was in want of food; my mother's family was opulent, and her relations high in office. I have been high in office myself, and became so great a favourite wherever I went that I was sure of promotion; yet I was always miserable when absent from my gang, and obliged to return to Thuggee. My father made me taste of that fatal goor, when I was yet a mere boy; and if I were to live a thousand years I should never be able to follow any other trade."

The possession of wealth, station in society, and the esteem of his fellows, could not keep this man from murder. From his extraordinary confession we may judge of the extreme difficulty of exterminating a sect who are impelled to their horrid practices, not only by the motives of self-interest which govern mankind in general, but by a fanaticism which fills up the measure of their whole existence. Even severity seems thrown away upon the followers of this brutalizing creed. To them, punishment is no example; they have no sympathy for a brother Thug who is hung at his own door by the British Government, nor have they any dread of his fate. Their invariable idea is, that their goddess only suffers those Thugs to fall into the hands of the law, who have contravened

the peculiar observances of Thuggee, and who have neglected the omens she sent them for their guidance.

To their neglect of the warnings of the goddess they attribute all the reverses which have of late years befallen their sect. It is expressly forbidden, in the creed of the old Thugs, to murder women or cripples. The modern Thugs have become unscrupulous upon this point, murdering women, and even children, with unrelenting barbarity. Captain Sleeman reports several conversations upon this subject, which he held at different times with Thugs, who had been taken prisoners, or who had turned approvers. One of them, named Zolfukar, said, in reply to the Captain, who accused him of murdering women, "Yes, and was not the greater part of Feringeea's and my gang seized, after we had murdered the two women and the little girl, at Manora, in 1830? and were we not ourselves both seized soon after? How could we survive things like that? Our ancestors never did such things." Lalmun, another Thug, in reply to a similar question, said, "Most of our misfortunes have come upon us for the murder of women. We all knew that they would come upon us some day, for this and other great sins. We were often admonished, but we did not take warning; and we deserve our fates." In speaking of the supposed protection which the goddess had extended to them in former times, Zolfukar said:—"Ah! we had some regard for religion then! We have lost it since. All kinds of men have been made Thugs, and all classes of people murdered, without distinction; and little attention has been paid to omens. How, after this, could we think to escape? * * * * Davee never forsook us till we neglected her!"

It might be imagined that men who spoke in this manner of the anger of the goddess, and who, even in custody, showed so much veneration for their unhappy calling, would hesitate before they turned informers, and laid bare the secrets and exposed the haunts of their fellows:—among the more civilized ruffians of Europe, we often find the one chivalrous trait of character, which makes them scorn a reward that must be earned by the blood of their accomplices: but in India there is no honour among thieves. When the approvers are asked, if they who still believe in the powers of the terrible goddess Davee, are not afraid to incur her displeasure

by informing of their fellows, they reply, that Davee has done her worst in abandoning them. She can inflict no severer punishment, and therefore gives herself no further concern about her degenerate children. This cowardly doctrine is, however, of advantage to the government that seeks to put an end to the sect, and has thrown a light upon their practices, which could never have been obtained from other sources.

Another branch of the Thug abomination has more recently been discovered by the indefatigable Captain Sleeman. The followers of this sect are called MEGPUNNAS, and they murder travellers, not to rob them of their wealth, but of their children, whom they afterwards sell into slavery. They entertain the same religious opinions as the Thugs, and have carried on their hideous practices, and entertained their dismal superstition, for about a dozen years, with impunity. The report of Captain Sleeman states, that the crime prevails almost exclusively in Delhi and the native principalities, or Rajpootana of Ulwar and Bhurtpore; and that it first spread extensively after the siege of Bhurtpore in 1826.

The original Thugs never or rarely travel with their wives; but the Megpunnas invariably take their families with them, the women and children being used to inveigle the victims. Poor travellers are always chosen by the Megpunnas as the objects of their murderous traffic. The females and children are sent on in advance to make acquaintance with emigrants or beggars on the road, travelling with their families, whom they entice to pass the night in some secluded place, where they are afterwards set upon by the men, and strangled. The women take care of the children. Such of them as are beautiful, are sold at a high price to the brothels of Delhi, or other large cities; while the boys and ill-favoured girls are sold for servants at a more moderate rate. These murders are perpetrated perhaps five hundred miles from the homes of the unfortunate victims; and the children thus obtained, deprived of all their relatives, are never inquired after. Even should any of their kin be alive, they are too far off and too poor to institute inquiries. One of the members, on being questioned, said the Megpunnas made more money than the other Thugs; it was more profitable to kill poor people for the sake of their children, than rich people for their wealth. Megpunnaism is supposed by its votaries to be, like Thuggee, under

the immediate protection of the great goddess Davee, or Kalee, whose favour is to be obtained before the commencement of every expedition, and whose omens, whether of good or evil, are to be diligently sought on all occasions. The first apostle to whom she communicated her commands for the formation of the new sect, and the rules and ordinances by which it was to be guided, was called Kheama Jemadar. He was considered so holy a man, that the Thugs and Megpunnas considered it an extreme felicity to gaze upon and touch him. At the moment of his arrest by the British authorities, a fire was raging in the village, and the inhabitants gathered round him and implored him to intercede with his god, that the flames might be extinguished. The Megpunna, says the tradition, stretched forth his hand to heaven, prayed, and the fire ceased immediately.

There now only remain to be considered the exertions that have been made to remove from the face of India this purulent and disgusting sore. From the year 1807 until 1826, the proceedings against Thuggee were not carried on with any extraordinary degree of vigour; but, in the latter year, the Government seems to have begun to act upon a settled determination to destroy it altogether. From 1826 to 1835, both included, there were committed to prison, in the various Presidencies, 1562 persons accused of this crime. Of these, 328 were hanged; 999 transported; 77 imprisoned for life; 71 imprisoned for shorter periods; 21 held to bail; and only 21 acquitted. Of the remainder, 31 died in prison, before they were brought to trial, 11 escaped, and 49 turned approvers.

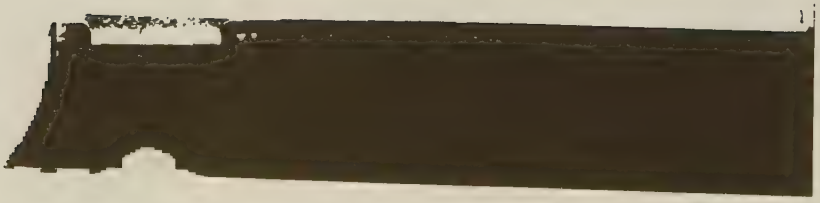
One Feringeea, a Thug leader of great notoriety, was delivered up to justice in the year 1830, in consequence of the reward of five hundred rupees offered for his apprehension by the Government. He was brought before Captain Sleeman, at Sangir, in the December of that year, and offered, if his life were spared, to give such information as would lead to the arrest of several extensive gangs which had carried on their murderous practices undetected for several years. He mentioned the place of rendezvous, for the following February, of some well-organized gangs, who were to proceed into Guzerat and Candeish. Captain Sleeman appeared to

doubt his information; but accompanied the Thug to a mango grove, two stages from Sangir, on the road to Seronage. They reached this place in the evening, and in the morning Feringeea pointed out three places in which he and his gang had, at different intervals, buried the bodies of three parties of travellers whom they had murdered. The sward had grown over all the spots, and not the slightest traces were to be seen that it had ever been disturbed. Under the sod of Captain Sleeman's tent were found the bodies of the first party, consisting of a pundit and his six attendants, murdered in 1818. Another party of five, murdered in 1824, were under the ground at the place where the Captain's horses had been tied up for the night; and four Brahmin carriers of the Ganges water, with a woman, were buried under his sleeping tent. Before the ground was moved, Captain Sleeman expressed some doubts; but Feringeea, after looking at the position of some neighbouring trees, said he would risk his life on the accuracy of his remembrance. The workmen dug five feet without discovering the bodies; but they were at length found a little beyond that depth, exactly as the Thug had described them. With this proof of his knowledge of the haunts of his brethren, Feringeea was promised his liberty and pardon if he would aid in bringing to justice the many large gangs to which he had belonged, and which were still prowling over the country. They were arrested in the February following, at the place of rendezvous pointed out by the approver, and most of them condemned and executed.

So far we learn from Captain Sleeman, who only brought down his tables to the close of the year 1835. A writer in the "Foreign Quarterly Review" furnishes an additional list of 241 persons, committed to prison in 1836, for being concerned in the murder and robbery of 474 individuals. Of these criminals, 91 were sentenced to death, and 22 to imprisonment for life, leaving 306, who were sentenced to transportation for life or shorter periods of imprisonment, or who turned approvers, or died in jail. Not one of the whole number was acquitted.

Great as is this amount of criminals who have been brought to justice, it is to be feared that many years must elapse before an evil so deeply rooted can be eradicated. The diffi-

culty is increased by the utter hopelessness of reformation as regards the survivors. Their numbers are still calculated to amount to ten thousand persons, who, taking the average of three murders annually for each, as calculated by Captain Sleeman and other writers, murder every year thirty thousand of their fellow-creatures. This average is said to be under the mark; but even if we were to take it at only a third of this calculation, what a frightful list it would be! When religion teaches men to go astray, they go far astray indeed!



THE WITCH MANIA.

What wrath of gods, or wicked influence
Of tears, conspiring wretched men t' afflict,
Hath pour'd on earth this noyous pestilence,
That mortal minds doth inwardly infect
With love of blindness and of ignorance?

Spenser's Tears of the Muses.

Countrymen. Hang her!—beat her!—kill her!

Justice. How now? Forbear this violence!

Mother Sawyer. A crew of villains—a knot of bloody hangmen! set to torment me!—I know not why.

Justice. Alas! neighbour Banks, are you a ringleader in mischief? Fie! to abuse an aged woman!

Banks. Woman! a she hell-cat, a witch! To prove her one, we no sooner set fire on the thatch of her house, but in she came running, as if the Devil had sent her in a barrel of gunpowder.

Ford's Witch of Edmonton.

THE belief that disembodied spirits may be permitted to revisit this world, has its foundation upon that sublime hope of immortality, which is at once the chief solace and greatest triumph of our reason. Even if revelation did not teach us, we feel that we have that within us which shall never die; and all our experience of this life but makes us cling the more fondly to that one repaying hope. But in the early days of "little knowledge," this grand belief became the source of a whole train of superstitions, which, in their turn, became the fount from whence flowed a deluge of blood and horror. Europe, for a period of two centuries and a half, brooded upon the idea, not only that parted spirits walked the earth to meddle in the affairs of men, but that men had power to summon evil spirits to their aid to work wo upon their fellows. An epidemic terror seized upon the nations; no man thought himself secure, either in his person or possessions, from the

machinations of the devil and his agents. Every calamity that befell him, he attributed to a witch. If a storm arose and blew down his barn, it was witchcraft; if his cattle died of a murrain—if disease fastened upon his limbs, or death entered suddenly, and snatched a beloved face from his hearth—they were not visitations of Providence, but the works of some neighbouring hag, whose wretchedness or insanity caused the ignorant to raise their finger, and point at her as a witch. The word was upon everybody's tongue—France, Italy, Germany, England, Scotland, and the far North, successively ran mad upon this subject, and for a long series of years, furnished their tribunals with so many trials for witchcraft, that other crimes were seldom or never spoken of. Thousands upon thousands of unhappy persons fell victims to this cruel and absurd delusion. In many cities of Germany, as will be shown more fully in its due place hereafter, the average number of executions for this pretended crime, was six hundred annually, or two every day, if we leave out the Sundays, when, it is to be supposed, that even this madness refrained from its work.

A misunderstanding of the famous text of the Mosaic law, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," no doubt led many conscientious men astray, whose superstition, warm enough before, wanted but a little corroboration to blaze out with desolating fury. In all ages of the world men have tried to hold converse with superior beings; and to pierce, by their means, the secrets of futurity. In the time of Moses, it is evident that there were imposters, who trafficked upon the credulity of mankind, and insulted the supreme majesty of the true God, by pretending to the power of divination. Hence the law which Moses, by divine command, promulgated against these criminals; but it did not follow, as the superstitious monomaniacs of the middle ages imagined, that the Bible established the existence of the power of divination by its edicts against those who pretended to it. From the best authorities, it appears that the Hebrew word, which has been rendered, *venefica*, and *witch*, means a poisoner and divineress—a dabbler in spells, or fortune-teller. The modern witch was a very different character, and joined to her pretended power of foretelling future events, that of working evil upon the life, limbs, and possessions of mankind. This power was

only to be acquired by an express compact, signed in blood, with the devil himself, by which the wizard or witch renounced baptism, and sold his or her immortal soul to the evil one, without any saving clause of redemption.

There are so many wondrous appearances in nature, for which science and philosophy cannot, even now, account, that it is not surprising that, when natural laws were still less understood, men should have attributed to supernatural agency every appearance which they could not otherwise explain. The merest tyro now understands various phenomena which the wisest of old could not fathom. The schoolboy knows why, upon high mountains, there should, on certain occasions, appear three or four suns in the firmament at once; and why the figure of a traveller upon one eminence should be reproduced, inverted, and of a gigantic stature, upon another. We all know the strange pranks which imagination can play in certain diseases—that the hypochondriac can see visions and spectres, and that there have been cases in which men were perfectly persuaded that they were teapots. Science has lifted up the veil, and rolled away all the fantastic horrors in which our forefathers shrouded these and similar cases. The man who now imagines himself a wolf, is sent to the hospital, instead of to the stake, as in the days of the witch mania; and earth, air, and sea are unpeopled of the grotesque spirits that were once believed to haunt them.

Before entering further into the history of Witchcraft, it may be as well if we consider the absurd impersonation of the evil principle formed by the monks in their legends. We must make acquaintance with the *primum mobile*, and understand what sort of a personage it was, who gave the witches, in exchange for their souls, the power to torment their fellow-creatures. The popular notion of the devil was, that he was a large, ill-formed, hairy sprite, with horns, a long tail, cloven feet, and dragon's wings. In this shape he was constantly brought on the stage by the monks in their early "miracles" and "mysteries." In these representations he was an important personage, and answered the purpose of the clown in the modern pantomime. The great fun for the people was to see him well belaboured by the saints with clubs or cudgels, and to hear him howl with pain as he limped off, maimed by the blow of some vigorous anchorite. St. Dunstan generally

served him the glorious trick for which he is renowned—catching hold of his nose with a pair of red-hot pincers, till

"Rocks and distant dells resounded with his cries."

Some of the saints spat in his face, to his very great annoyance; and others chopped pieces off his tail, which, however, always grew on again. This was paying him in his own coin, and amused the populace mightily; for they all remembered the scurvy tricks he had played them and their forefathers. It was believed that he endeavoured to trip people up, by laying his long invisible tail in their way, and giving it a sudden whisk when their legs were over it;—that he used to get drunk, and swear like a trooper, and be so mischievous in his cups as to raise tempests and earthquakes, to destroy the fruits of the earth and the barns and homesteads of true believers;—that he used to run invisible spits into people by way of amusing himself in the long winter evenings, and to proceed to taverns and regale himself with the best, offering in payment pieces of gold which, on the dawn of the following morning, invariably turned into slates. Sometimes, disguised as a large drake, he used to lurk among the bulrushes, and frighten the weary traveller out of his wits by his awful quack. The reader will remember the lines of Burns in his address to the "De'il," which so well express the popular notion on this point—

"Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin light,
Wi' you, mysel, I got a fright
Ayont the lough;
Ye, like a rash-bush, stood in sight
Wi' waving sough.

"The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristled hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch stour, 'quaick! quaick!'
Among the springs
Awa ye squatter'd, like a drake,
On whistling wings."

In all the stories circulated and believed about him, he was represented as an ugly, petty, mischievous spirit, who rejoiced in playing off all manner of fantastic tricks upon poor

humanity. Milton seems to have been the first who succeeded in giving any but a ludicrous description of him. The sublime pride which is the quintessence of evil, was unconceived before his time. All other limners made him merely grotesque, but Milton made him awful. In this the monks showed themselves but miserable romancers; for their object undoubtedly was to represent the fiend as terrible as possible: but there was nothing grand about their Satan; on the contrary, he was a low mean devil, whom it was easy to circumvent and fine fun to play tricks with. But, as is well and eloquently remarked by a modern writer,* the subject has also its serious side. An Indian deity, with its wild distorted shape and grotesque attitude, appears merely ridiculous when separated from its accessories and viewed by daylight in a museum; but restore it to the darkness of its own hideous temple, bring back to our recollection the victims that have bled upon its altar, or been crushed beneath its car, and our sense of the ridiculous subsides into aversion and horror. So, while the superstitious dreams of former times are regarded as mere speculative insanities, we may be for a moment amused with the wild incoherences of the patients; but, when we reflect, that out of these hideous misconceptions of the principle of evil arose the belief in witchcraft—that this was no dead faith, but one operating on the whole being of society, urging on the wisest and the mildest to deeds of murder, or cruelties scarcely less than murder—that the learned and the beautiful, young and old, male and female, were devoted by its influence to the stake and the scaffold—every feeling disappears, except that of astonishment that such things could be, and humiliation at the thought that the delusion was as lasting as it was universal.

Besides this chief personage, there was an infinite number of inferior demons, who played conspicuous parts in the creed of witchcraft. The pages of Bekker, Leloyer, Bodin, Delrio, and De Lancre abound with descriptions of the qualities of these imps and the functions which were assigned them. From these authors, three of whom were commissioners for the trial of

* See article on Demonology, in the sixth volume of the "Foreign Quarterly Review."

witches, and who wrote from the confessions made by the supposed criminals and the evidence delivered against them, and from the more recent work of M. Jules Garinet, the following summary of the creed has been, with great pains, extracted. The student who is desirous of knowing more, is referred to the works in question; he will find enough in every leaf to make his blood curdle with shame and horror: but the purity of these pages shall not be soiled by anything so ineffably humiliating and disgusting as a complete exposition of them: what is here culled will be a sufficient sample of the popular belief, and the reader would but lose time who should seek in the writings of the Demonologists for more ample details. He will gain nothing by lifting the veil which covers their unutterable obscenities, unless, like Sterne, he wishes to gather fresh evidence of "what a beast man is." In that case, he will find plenty there to convince him that the beast would be libelled by the comparison.

It was thought that the earth swarmed with millions of demons of both sexes, many of whom, like the human race, traced their lineage up to Adam, who, after the fall, was led astray by devils, assuming the forms of beautiful women to deceive him. These demons "increased and multiplied," among themselves, with the most extraordinary rapidity. Their bodies were of the thin air, and they could pass through the hardest substances with the greatest ease. They had no fixed residence or abiding place, but were tossed to and fro in the immensity of space. When thrown together in great multitudes, they excited whirlwinds in the air and tempests in the waters, and took delight in destroying the beauty of nature and the monuments of the industry of man. Although they increased among themselves like ordinary creatures, their numbers were daily augmented by the souls of wicked men—of children stillborn—of women who died in childbed, and of persons killed in duels. The whole air was supposed to be full of them, and many unfortunate men and women drew them by thousands into their mouths and nostrils at every inspiration; and the demons, lodging in their bowels or other parts of their bodies, tormented them with pains and diseases of every kind, and sent them frightful dreams. St. Gregory of Nice relates a story of a nun who forgot to say her *benedicite*, and make the sign of a cross, before she sat down to

supper, and who, in consequence swallowed a demon concealed among the leaves of a lettuce. Most persons said the number of these demons was so great that they could not be counted, but Wierus asserted that they amounted to no more than seven millions, four hundred and five thousand, nine hundred, and twenty six; and that they were divided into seventy-two companies or battalions, to each of which there was a prince or captain. They could assume any shape they pleased. When they were male, they were called incubi; and when female, succubi. They sometimes made themselves hideous; and at other times, they assumed shapes of such transcendent loveliness, that mortal eyes never saw beauty to compete with theirs.

Although the devil and his legions could appear to mankind at any time, it was generally understood that he preferred the night between Friday and Saturday. If Satan himself appeared in human shape, he was never perfectly, and in all respects, like a man. He was either too black or too white —too large or too small, or some of his limbs were out of proportion to the rest of his body. Most commonly his feet were deformed; and he was obliged to curl up and conceal his tail in some part of his habiliments; for, take what shape he would, he could not get rid of that encumbrance. He sometimes changed himself into a tree or a river; and upon one occasion he transformed himself into a barrister, as we learn from Wierus, book iv, chapter ix. In the reign of Philippe le Bel, he appeared to a monk in the shape of a dark man, riding a tall black horse—then as a friar—afterwards as an ass, and finally as a coach-wheel. Instances are not rare in which both he and his inferior demons have taken the form of handsome young men; and, successfully concealing their tails, have married beautiful young women, who have had children by them. Such children were easily recognisable by their continual shrieking—by their requiring five nurses to suckle them, and by their never growing fat.

All these demons were at the command of any individual, who would give up his immortal soul to the prince of evil for the privilege of enjoying their services for a stated period. The wizard or witch could send them to execute the most difficult missions: whatever the witch commanded was per-

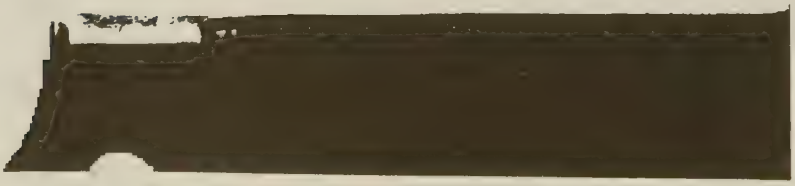
formed, except it was a good action, in which case the order was disobeyed, and evil worked upon herself instead.

At intervals, according to the pleasure of Satan, there was a general meeting of the demons and all the witches. This meeting was called the Sabbath, from its taking place on the Saturday or immediately after midnight on Friday. These Sabbaths were sometimes held for one district, sometimes for another, and once at least, every year, it was held on the Brocken, or among other high mountains, as a general sabbath of the fiends for the whole of Christendom.

The devil generally chose a place where four roads met, as the scene of this assembly, or if that was not convenient, the neighbourhood of a lake. Upon this spot nothing would ever afterwards grow, as the hot feet of the demons and witches burnt the principle of fecundity from the earth, and rendered it barren for ever. When orders had been once issued for the meeting of the Sabbath, all the wizards and witches who failed to attend it were lashed by demons with a rod made of serpents or scorpions, as a punishment for their inattention or want of punctuality.

In France and England, the witches were supposed to ride uniformly upon broomsticks: but in Italy and Spain, the devil himself, in the shape of a goat, used to transport them on his back, which lengthened or shortened according to the number of witches he was desirous of accommodating. No witch, when proceeding to the Sabbath, could get out by a door or window, were she to try ever so much. Their general mode of ingress was by the keyhole, and of egress, by the chimney, up which they flew, broom and all, with the greatest ease. To prevent the absence of the witches from being noticed by their neighbours, some inferior demon was commanded to assume their shapes and lie in their beds, feigning illness, until the Sabbath was over.

When all the wizards and witches had arrived at the place of rendezvous, the infernal ceremonies of the Sabbath began. Satan, having assumed his favourite shape of a large he-goat, with a face in front and another in his haunches, took his seat upon a throne; and all present, in succession, paid their respects to him, and kissed him in his face behind. This done, he appointed a master of the ceremonies, in company with whom he made a personal examination of all the wizards



and witches, to see whether they had the secret mark about them by which they were stamped as the devil's own. This mark was always insensible to pain. Those who had not yet been marked, received the mark from the master of the ceremonies; the devil at the same time bestowing nicknames upon them. This done, they all began to sing and dance in the most furious manner, until some one arrived who was anxious to be admitted into their society. They were then silent for a while, until the new-comer had denied his salvation, kissed the devil, spat upon the Bible, and sworn obedience to him in all things. They then began dancing again with all their might, and singing these words,

"Alegremos, Alegremos!
Que gente va tenemos!"

In the course of an hour or two, they generally became wearied of this violent exercise, and they all sat down and recounted the evil deeds they had done since their last meeting. Those who had not been malicious and mischievous enough towards their fellow-creatures, received personal chastisement from Satan himself, who flogged them with thorns or scorpions till they were covered with blood, and unable to sit or stand.

When this ceremony was concluded, they were all amused by a dance of toads. Thousands of these creatures sprang out of the earth; and standing on their hind-legs, danced, while the devil played the bagpipes or the trumpet. These toads were all endowed with the faculty of speech, and entreated the witches to reward them with the flesh of unbaptized babes for their exertions to give them pleasure. The witches promised compliance. The devil bade them remember to keep their word; and then stamping his foot, caused all the toads to sink into the earth in an instant. The place being thus cleared, preparation was made for the banquet, where all manner of disgusting things were served up and greedily devoured by the demons and witches; although the latter were sometimes regaled with choice meats and expensive wines from golden plates and crystal goblets; but they were never thus favoured unless they had done an extraordinary number of evil deeds since the last period of meeting.

After the feast, they began dancing again; but such as had no relish for any more exercise in that way, amused themselves by mocking the holy sacrament of baptism. For this purpose, the toads were again called up, and sprinkled with filthy water; the devil making the sign of the cross, and all the witches calling out, "*In nomine Patricâ, Aragueaco Petrica, agora! agora! Valentia, jouando goure gaits goustia!*" which meant, "In the name of Patrick, Petrick of Aragon,—now, now, all our ills are over!"

When the devil wished to be particularly amused, he made the witches strip off their clothes and dance before him, each with a cat tied round her neck, and another dangling from her body in form of a tail. When the cock crew, they all disappeared, and the Sabbath was ended.

This is a summary of the belief which prevailed for many centuries nearly all over Europe, and which is far from eradicated even at this day. It was varied in some respects in several countries, but the main points were the same in France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, and the far North of Europe.

The early annals of France abound with stories of supposed sorcery, but it was not until the time of Charlemagne that the crime acquired any great importance. "This monarch," says M. Jules Garinet,* "had several times given orders that all necromancers, astrologers, and witches should be driven from his states; but as the number of criminals augmented daily, he found it necessary at last to resort to severer measures. In consequence, he published several edicts, which may be found at length in the 'Capitulaire de Baluse.' By these, every sort of magic, enchantment, and witchcraft was forbidden; and the punishment of death decreed against those who in any way evoked the devil—compounded love-philters—afflicted either man or woman with barrenness—troubled the atmosphere—excited tempests—destroyed the fruits of the earth—dried up the milk of cows, or tormented their fellow-creatures with sores and diseases. All persons found guilty of exercising these execrable arts, were to be executed immediately upon conviction, that the earth might be rid of the burden

* "Histoire de la Magie en France. Rois de la seconde race," page 29.

and curse of their presence; and those even who consulted them might also be punished with death.*

After this time, prosecutions for witchcraft are continually mentioned, especially by the French historians. It was a crime imputed with so much ease, and repelled with so much difficulty, that the powerful, whenever they wanted to ruin the weak, and could fix no other imputation upon them, had only to accuse them of witchcraft to insure their destruction. Instances, in which this crime was made a pretext for the most violent persecution, both of individuals and of communities, whose real offences were purely political or religious, must be familiar to every reader. The extermination of the Stedinger, in 1234; of the Templars, from 1307 to 1313; the execution of Joan of Arc, in 1429; and the unhappy scenes of Arras, in 1459, are the most prominent. The first of these is perhaps the least known, but is not among the least remarkable. The following account, from Dr. Kortüm's interesting history† of the republican confederacies of the Middle Ages, will show the horrible convenience of imputations of witchcraft, when royal or priestly wolves wanted a pretext for a quarrel with the sheep.

The Frieslanders, inhabiting the district from the Weser to the Zuydersee, had long been celebrated for their attachment to freedom, and their successful struggles in its defence. As early as the eleventh century, they had formed a general confederacy against the encroachments of the Normans and the Saxons, which was divided into seven *seelands*, holding annually a diet under a large oak tree at Aurich, near the Upstalboom. Here they managed their own affairs, without the control of the clergy and ambitious nobles who surrounded them, to the great scandal of the latter. They already had true notions of a representative government. The deputies of the people levied the necessary taxes, deliberated on the

* M. Michaud, in his "History of the Crusades," M. Guinguené, in his "Literary History of Italy," and some other critics, have objected to Tasso's poem, that he has attributed to the Crusaders a belief in magic, which did not exist at the time. If these critics had referred to the Edicts of Charlemagne, they would have seen that Tasso was right, and that a disposition too eager to spy out imperfections in a great work was leading themselves into error.

† "Entstehungsgeschichte der freistadlischen Bünde im Mittelalter, von Dr. F. Kortüm." 1827.

affairs of the community, and performed, in their simple and patriarchal manner, nearly all the functions of the representative assemblies of the present day. Finally, the Archbishop of Bremen, together with the Count of Oldenburg and other neighbouring potentates, formed a league against that section of the Frieslanders, known by the name of the Stedinger, and succeeded, after harassing them and sowing dissensions among them for many years, in bringing them under the yoke. But the Stedinger, devotedly attached to their ancient laws, by which they had attained a degree of civil and religious liberty very uncommon in that age, did not submit without a violent struggle. They arose in insurrection, in the year 1204, in defence of the ancient customs of their country—refused to pay taxes to the feudal chiefs, or tithes to the clergy, who had forced themselves into their peaceful retreats, and drove out many of their oppressors. For a period of more than eight-and-twenty years the brave Stedinger continued the struggle single-handed against the forces of the Archbishops of Bremen and the Counts of Oldenburg, and destroyed, in the year 1232, the strong castle of Slutterberg, near Delmenhorst, built by the latter nobleman as a position from which he could send out his marauders to plunder and destroy the possessions of the peasantry.

The invincible courage of these poor people proving too strong for their oppressors to cope with, by the ordinary means of warfare, the Archbishop of Bremen applied to Pope Gregory IX. for his spiritual aid against them. That prelate entered cordially into the cause, and launching forth his anathema against the Stedinger as heretics and witches, encouraged all true believers to assist in their extermination. A large body of thieves and fanatics broke into their country in the year 1233, killing and burning wherever they went, and not sparing either women or children, the sick or the aged, in their rage. The Stedinger, however, rallied in great force, routed their invaders, and killed in battle their leader, Count Burckhardt of Oldenburg, with many inferior chieftains.

Again the Pope was applied to, and a crusade against the Stedinger was preached in all that part of Germany. The Pope wrote to all the bishops and leaders of the faithful an exhortation to arm, to root out from the land those abomi-

nable witches and wizards. "The Stedinger," said his Holiness, "seduced by the devil, have abjured all the laws of God and man; slandered the Church—insulted the holy sacraments—consulted witches to raise evil spirits—shed blood like water—taken the lives of priests, and concocted an infernal scheme to propagate the worship of the devil, whom they adore under the name of Asmodi. The devil appears to them in different shapes; sometimes as a goose or a duck, and at others in the figure of a pale, black-eyed youth, with a melancholy aspect, whose embrace fills their hearts with eternal hatred against the holy church of Christ. The devil presides at their Sabbaths, when they all kiss him and dance around him. He then envelopes them in total darkness, and they all, male and female, give themselves up to the grossest and most disgusting debauchery."

In consequence of these letters of the Pope, the Emperor of Germany, Frederic II., also pronounced his ban against them. The Bishops of Ratzebourg, Lubec, Osnabrück, Munster, and Minden took up arms to exterminate them, aided by the Duke of Brabant, the Counts of Holland, of Clêves, of the Mark, of Oldenburg, of Egmond, of Diest, and many other powerful nobles. An army of forty thousand men was soon collected, which marched, under the command of the Duke of Brabant, into the country of the Stedinger. The latter mustered vigorously in defence of their lives and liberties, but could raise no greater force, including every man capable of bearing arms, than eleven thousand men to cope against the overwhelming numbers of their foe. They fought with the energy of despair, but all in vain. Eight thousand of them were slain on the field of battle; the whole race was exterminated; and the enraged conquerors scoured the country in all directions—slew the women and children and old men—drove away the cattle—fired the woods and cottages, and made a total waste of the land.

Just as absurd and effectual was the charge brought against the Templars in 1307, when they had rendered themselves obnoxious to the potentates and prelacy of Christendom. Their wealth, their power, their pride, and their insolence had raised up enemies on every side; and every sort of accusation was made against them, but failed to work their overthrow, until the terrible cry of witchcraft was let loose upon

them. This effected its object, and the Templars were extirpated. They were accused of having sold their souls to the devil, and of celebrating all the infernal mysteries of the witches' Sabbath. It was pretended that, when they admitted a novice into their order, they forced him to renounce his salvation and curse Jesus Christ; that they then made him submit to many unholy and disgusting ceremonies, and forced him to kiss the Superior on the cheek, the navel, and the breech; and spit three times upon a crucifix. That all the members were forbidden to have connexion with women, but might give themselves up without restraint to every species of unmentionable debauchery. That when, by any mischance, a Templar infringed this order, and a child was born, the whole order met, and tossed it about like a shuttlecock from one to the other until it expired; that they then roasted it by a slow fire, and with the fat which trickled from it anointed the hair and beard of a large image of the devil. It was also said that, when one of the knights died, his body was burnt into a powder, and then mixed with wine and drunk by every member of the order. Philip IV., who, to exercise his own implacable hatred, invented, in all probability, the greater part of these charges, issued orders for the immediate arrest of all the Templars in his dominions. The Pope afterwards took up the cause with almost as much fervour as the King of France; and in every part of Europe, the Templars were thrown into prison and their goods and estates confiscated. Hundreds of them, when put to the rack, confessed even the most preposterous of the charges against them, and by so doing, increased the popular clamour and the hopes of their enemies. It is true that, when removed from the rack, they denied all they had previously confessed; but this circumstance only increased the outcry, and was numbered as an additional crime against them. They were considered in a worse light than before, and condemned forthwith to the flames, as relapsed heretics. Fifty-nine of these unfortunate victims were all burned together by a slow fire in a field in the suburbs of Paris, protesting to the very last moment of their lives, their innocence of the crimes imputed to them, and refusing to accept of pardon upon condition of acknowledging themselves guilty. Similar scenes were enacted in the provinces; and for four years, hardly a month passed without witnessing the execution

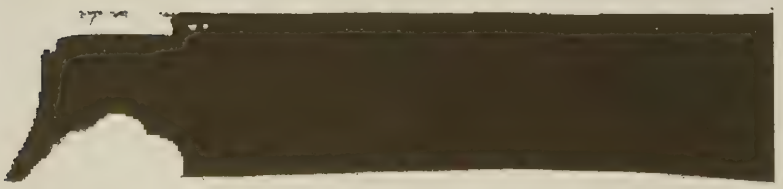
of one or more of these unhappy men. Finally, in 1313, the last scene of this tragedy closed by the burning of the Grand-Master, Jacques de Molay, and his companion, Guy, the Commander of Normandy. Anything more atrocious it is impossible to conceive; disgraceful alike to the monarch who originated, the pope who supported, and the age which tolerated the monstrous iniquity. That the malice of a few could invent such a charge, is a humiliating thought for the lover of his species; but that millions of mankind should credit it, is still more so.

The execution of Joan of Arc is the next most notorious example which history affords us, of the imputation of witchcraft against a political enemy. Instances of similar persecution, in which this crime was made the pretext for the gratification of political or religious hatred, might be multiplied to a great extent. But it is better to proceed at once to the consideration of the bull of Pope Innocent, the torch that set fire to the long-laid train, and caused so fearful an explosion over the Christian world. It will be necessary, however, to go back for some years anterior to that event, the better to understand the motives that influenced the Church in the promulgation of that fearful document.

Towards the close of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century, many witches were burned in different parts of Europe. As a natural consequence of the severe persecution, the crime, or the pretenders to it, increased. Those who found themselves accused and threatened with the penalties, if they happened to be persons of a bad and malicious disposition, wished they had the power imputed to them, that they might be revenged upon their persecutors. Numerous instances are upon record of half-crazed persons being found muttering the spells which were supposed to raise the evil one. When religion and law alike recognised the crime, it is no wonder that the weak in reason and the strong in imagination, especially when they were of a nervous temperament, fancied themselves endued with the terrible powers of which all the world was speaking. The belief of their neighbours did not lag behind their own, and execution was the speedy consequence.

As the fear of witchcraft increased, the Catholic clergy strove to fix the imputation of it upon those religious sects,

the pioneers of the Reformation, who began about this time to be formidable to the church of Rome. If a charge of heresy could not insure their destruction, that of sorcery and witchcraft never failed. In the year 1459, a devoted congregation of the Waldenses, at Arras, who used to repair at night to worship God in their own manner in solitary places, fell victims to an accusation of sorcery. It was rumoured in Arras that in the desert places to which they retired, the devil appeared before them in human form, and read from a large book his laws and ordinances, to which they all promised obedience; that he then distributed money and food among them, to bind them to his service, which done, they gave themselves up to every species of lewdness and debauchery. Upon these rumours, several creditable persons in Arras were seized and imprisoned, together with a number of decrepit and idiotic old women. The rack, that convenient instrument for making the accused confess anything, was of course put in requisition. Monstrelet, in his Chronicle, says that they were tortured until some of them admitted the truth of the whole accusations, and said besides, that they had seen and recognised, in their nocturnal assemblies many persons of rank; many prelates, seigneurs, governors of bailliages, and mayors of cities, being such names as the examiners had themselves suggested to the victims. Several who had been thus informed against, were thrown into prison, and so horribly tortured, that reason fled, and, in their ravings of pain, they also confessed their midnight meetings with the devil, and the oaths they had taken to serve him. Upon these confessions, judgment was pronounced: the poor old women, as usual in such cases, were hanged and burned in the market-place; the more wealthy delinquents were allowed to escape, upon payment of large sums. It was soon after universally recognised that these trials had been conducted in the most odious manner, and that the judges had motives of private vengeance against many of the more influential persons who had been implicated. The Parliament of Paris afterwards declared the sentence illegal, and the judges iniquitous; but its *arret* was too late to be of service even to those who had paid the fine, or to punish the authorities who had misconducted themselves; for it was not delivered until thirty-two years after the executions had taken place.



In the mean time, accusations of witchcraft spread rapidly in France, Italy, and Germany. Strange to say, that although in the first instance chiefly directed against heretics, the latter were as firm believers in the crime as even the Catholics themselves. In after times we also find that the Lutherans and Calvinists became greater witch-burners than ever the Romanists had been: so deeply was the prejudice rooted. Every other point of belief was in dispute, but that was considered by every sect to be as well established as the authenticity of the Scriptures, or the existence of a God.

But at this early period of the epidemic the persecutions were directed by the heads of the Catholic Church. The spread of heresy betokened, it was thought, the coming of Antichrist. Florimond, in his work concerning the Antichrist, lets us fully into the secret of these prosecutions. He says, "All who have afforded us some signs of the approach of Antichrist agree that the increase of sorcery and witchcraft is to distinguish the melancholy period of his advent; and was ever age so afflicted as ours? The seats destined for criminals in our courts of justice are blackened with persons accused of this guilt. There are not judges enough to try them. Our dungeons are gorged with them. No day passes that we do not render our tribunals bloody by the dooms which we pronounce, or in which we do not return to our homes, discountenanced and terrified at the horrible confessions which we have heard. And the devil is accounted so good a master, that we cannot commit so great a number of his slaves to the flames, but what there shall arise from their ashes a sufficient number to supply their place."

Florimond here spoke the general opinion of the Church of Rome; but it never suggested itself to the mind of any person engaged in these trials, that if it were indeed a devil, who raised up so many new witches to fill the places of those consumed, it was no other than one in their own employ—the devil of persecution. But so it was. The more they burned, the more they found to burn; until it became a common prayer with women in the humbler walks of life, that they might never live to grow old. It was sufficient to be aged, poor, and ill-tempered, to insure death at the stake or the scaffold.

In the year 1487 there was a severe storm in Switzerland,

which laid waste the country for four miles around Constance. Two wretched old women, whom the popular voice had long accused of witchcraft, were arrested on the preposterous charge of having raised the tempest. The rack was displayed, and the two poor creatures extended upon it. In reply to various leading questions from their tormentors, they owned, in their agony, that they were in the constant habit of meeting the devil, that they had sold their souls to him, and that at their command he had raised the tempest. Upon this insane and blasphemous charge they were condemned to die. In the criminal registers of Constance there stands against the name of each the simple but significant phrase, "*convicta et combusta.*"

This case and hundreds of others were duly reported to the ecclesiastical powers. There happened at that time to be a Pontiff at the head of the Church who had given much of his attention to the subject of witchcraft, and who, with the intent of rooting out the crime, did more to increase it than any other man that ever lived. John Baptist Cibo, elected to the Papacy in 1485, under the designation of Innocent VIII., was sincerely alarmed at the number of witches, and launched forth his terrible manifesto against them. In his celebrated bull of 1488, he called the nations of Europe to the rescue of the Church of Christ upon earth, imperilled by the arts of Satan, and set forth the horrors that had reached his ears; how that numbers of both sexes had intercourse with the infernal fiends; how by their sorceries they afflicted both man and beast; how they blighted the marriage bed, destroyed the births of women and the increase of cattle; and how they blasted the corn on the ground, the grapes of the vineyard, the fruits of the trees, and the herbs of the field. In order that criminals so atrocious might no longer pollute the earth, he appointed inquisitors in every country, armed with the apostolic power to convict and punish.

It was now that the *Witch Mania*, properly so called, may be said to have fairly commenced. Immediately a class of men sprang up in Europe, who made it the sole business of their lives to discover and burn the witches. Sprenger, in Germany, was the most celebrated of these national scourges.

In his notorious work, the "Malleus Maleficarum," he laid down a regular form of trial, and appointed a course of exa-

mination by which the inquisitors in other countries might best discover the guilty. The questions, which were always enforced by torture, were of the most absurd and disgusting nature. The inquisitors were required to ask the suspected whether they had midnight meetings with the devil? whether they attended the witch's sabbath on the Brocken? whether they had their familiar spirits? whether they could raise whirlwinds and call down the lightning? and whether they had sexual intercourse with Satan?

Straightway the inquisitors set to work; Cumanus, in Italy, burned forty-one poor women in one province alone, and Sprenger, in Germany, burned a number which can never be ascertained correctly, but which, it is agreed on all hands, amounted to more than five hundred in a year. The great resemblance between the confessions of the unhappy victims was regarded as a new proof of the existence of the crime. But this is not astonishing. The same questions from the "Malleus Maleficarum," were put to them all, and torture never failed to educe the answer required by the inquisitor. Numbers of people whose imaginations were filled with these horrors, went further in the way of confession than ever their tormentors anticipated, in the hope that they would thereby be saved from the rack, and put out of their misery at once. Some confessed that they had had children by the devil; but no one, who had ever been a mother, gave utterance to such a frantic imagining, even in the extremity of her anguish. The childless only confessed it, and were burned instanter as unworthy to live.

For fear the zeal of the enemies of Satan should cool, successive Popes appointed new commissions. One was appointed by Alexander VI., in 1494; another by Leo X., in 1521; and a third by Adrian VI., in 1522. They were all armed with the same powers to hunt out and destroy, and executed their fearful functions but too rigidly. In Geneva alone five hundred persons were burned in the years 1515 and 1516, under the title of Protestant witches. It would appear that their chief crime was heresy, and their witchcraft merely an aggravation. Bartololomeo de Spina has a list still more fearful. He informs us that, in the year 1524, no less than a thousand persons suffered death for witchcraft in the district of Como, and that for several years afterwards the

average number of victims exceeded a hundred annually. One inquisitor, Remigius, took great credit to himself for having, during fifteen years, convicted and burned nine hundred.

In France, about the year 1520, fires for the execution of witches blazed in almost every town. Danæus, in his "Dialogues of Witches," says they were so numerous that it would be next to impossible to tell the number of them. So deep was the thraldom of the human mind, that the friends and relatives of the accused parties looked on and approved. The wife or sister of a murderer might sympathize in his fate, but the wives and husbands of sorcerers and witches had no pity. The truth is that pity was dangerous, for it was thought no one could have compassion on the sufferings of a witch who was not a dabbler in the art: to have wept for a witch would have insured the stake. In some districts, however, the exasperation of the people broke out, in spite of superstition. The inquisitor of a rural township in Piedmont burned the victims so plentifully, and so fast, that there was not a family in the place which did not lose a member. The people at last arose, and the inquisitor was but too happy to escape from the country with whole limbs. The archbishop of the diocese proceeded afterwards to the trial of such as the inquisitor had left in prison.

Some of the charges were so utterly preposterous that the poor wretches were at once liberated; others met a harder, but the usual fate. Some of them were accused of having joined the witches' dance at midnight under a blasted oak, where they had been seen by creditable people. The husbands of several of these women (two of whom were young and beautiful) swore positively that at the time stated their wives were comfortably asleep in their arms; but it was all in vain. Their word was taken, but the archbishop told them they had been deceived by the devil and their own senses. It was true they might have had the semblance of their wives in their beds, but the originals were far away, at the devil's dance under the oak. The honest fellows were confounded, and their wives burned forthwith.

In the year 1561, five poor women of Verneuil were accused of transforming themselves into cats, and in that

shape attending the sabbath of the fiends—prowling around Satan, who presided over them in the form of a goat, and dancing, to amuse him, upon his back. They were found guilty, and burned.*

In 1564, three wizards and a witch appeared before the Presidents Salvert and D'Avanton: they confessed, when extended on the rack, that they anointed the sheep-pens with infernal unguents to kill the sheep—that they attended the sabbath, where they saw a great black goat, which spoke to them, and made them kiss him, each holding a lighted candle in his hand while he performed the ceremony. They were all executed at Poitiers.

In 1571, the celebrated sorcerer, Trois Echelles, was burned in the Place de Grève, in Paris. He confessed, in the presence of Charles IX., and of the Marshals de Montmorency, De Retz, and the Sieur du Mazille, physician to the King, that he could perform the most wonderful things by the aid of a devil to whom he had sold himself. He described at great length the saturnalia of the fiends—the sacrifices which they offered up—the debaucheries they committed with the young and handsome witches, and the various modes of preparing the infernal unguent for blighting cattle. He said he had upwards of twelve hundred accomplices in the crime of witchcraft in various parts of France, whom he named to the King, and many of whom were afterwards arrested and suffered execution.

At Dôle, two years afterwards, Gilles Garnier, a native of Lyons, was indicted for being a *loup-garou*, or man-wolf, and for prowling in that shape about the country at night to devour little children. The indictment against him, as read by Henri Camus, doctor of laws and counsellor of the King, was to the effect that he, Gilles Garnier, had seized upon a little girl, twelve years of age, whom he drew into a vineyard and there killed, partly with his teeth and partly with his hands, seeming like wolf's paws—that from thence he trailed her bleeding body along the ground with his teeth into the wood of La Serre, where he ate the greatest portion of her

* Bodin, page 95. Garinet, page 125. "Anti-demon de Serclier," page 346.

at one meal, and carried the remainder home to his wife; that, upon another occasion, eight days before the festival of All Saints, he was seen to seize another child in his teeth, and would have devoured her had she not been rescued by the country people—and that the said child died a few days afterwards of the injuries he had inflicted; that fifteen days after the same festival of All Saints, being again in the shape of a wolf, he devoured a boy thirteen years of age, having previously torn off his leg and thigh with his teeth, and hid them away for his breakfast on the morrow. He was, furthermore, indicted for giving way to the same diabolical and unnatural propensities even in his shape of a man, and that he had strangled a boy in a wood with the intention of eating him, which crime he would have effected if he had not been seen by the neighbours and prevented.

Gilles Garnier was put to the rack, after fifty witnesses had deposed against him: he confessed everything that was laid to his charge. He was thereupon, brought back into the presence of his judges, when Dr. Camus, in the name of the Parliament of Dôle, pronounced the following sentence:—

"Seeing that Gilles Garnier has, by the testimony of credible witnesses, and by his own spontaneous confession, been proved guilty of the abominable crimes of lycanthropy and witchcraft, this court condemns him, the said Gilles, to be this day taken in a cart from this spot to the place of execution, accompanied by the executioner (*maître exécuteur de la haute justice*), where he, by the said executioner, shall be tied to a stake and burned alive, and that his ashes be then scattered to the winds. The Court further condemns him the said Gilles, to the costs of this prosecution."

"Given at Dôle this 18th day of January, 1573."

In 1578, the Parliament of Paris was occupied for several days with the trial of a man, named Jacques Rollet. He, also, was found guilty of being a *loup-garou*, and in that shape devouring a little boy. He was burnt alive in the Place de Grêve.

In 1579, so much alarm was excited in the neighbourhood of Melun by the increase of witches and *loup-garous*, that a council was held to devise some measures to stay the evil.

A decree was passed, that all witches, and consulters with witches, should be punished with death; and not only those, but fortune-tellers and conjurors of every kind. The Parliament of Rouen took up the same question in the following year, and decreed that the possession of a *grimoire*, or book of spells, was sufficient evidence of witchcraft; and that all persons on whom such books were found should be burned alive. Three councils were held in different parts of France in the year 1583, all in relation to the same subject. The Parliament of Bourdeaux issued strict injunctions to all curates and clergy whatever, to use redoubled efforts to root out the crime of witchcraft. The Parliament of Tours was equally peremptory, and feared the judgments of an offended God, if all these dealers with the devil were not swept from the face of the land. The Parliament of Rheims was particularly severe against the *noueurs d'aiguillette*, or "tiers of the knot;" people of both sexes, who took pleasure in preventing the consummation of marriage, that they might counteract the command of God to our first parents, to increase and multiply. This Parliament held it to be sinful to wear amulets to preserve from witchcraft; and that this practice might not be continued within its jurisdiction, drew up a form of exorcism, which would more effectually defeat the agents of the devil, and put them to flight.

A case of witchcraft, which created a great sensation in its day, occurred in 1588, at a village in the mountains of Auvergne, about two leagues from Apchon. A gentleman of that place being at his window, there passed a friend of his who had been out hunting, and who was then returning to his own house. The gentleman asked his friend what sport he had had; upon which the latter informed him that he had been attacked in the plain by a large and savage wolf, which he had shot at, without wounding; and that he had then drawn out his hunting-knife and cut off the animal's fore-paw, as it sprang upon his neck to devour him. The huntsman, upon this, put his hand into his bag to pull out the paw, but was shocked to find that it was a woman's hand, with a wedding-ring on the finger. The gentleman immediately recognised his wife's ring, "which," says the indictment against her, "made him begin to suspect some evil of her." He immediately went in search of her, and found her sitting by

the fire in the kitchen, with her arm hidden underneath her apron. He tore off her apron with great vehemence, and found that she had no hand, and that the stump was even then bleeding. She was given into custody, and burned at Riom in presence of some thousands of spectators.*

In the midst of these executions, rare were the gleams of mercy; few instances are upon record of any acquittal taking place when the charge was witchcraft. The discharge of fourteen persons by the Parliament of Paris, in the year 1589, is almost a solitary example of a return to reason. Fourteen persons, condemned to death for witchcraft, appealed against the judgment to the Parliament of Paris, which for political reasons had been exiled to Tours. The Parliament named four commissioners, Pierre Pigray, the King's surgeon, and Messieurs Leroi, Renard, and Falaiseau, the King's physicians, to visit and examine these witches, and see whether they had the mark of the devil upon them. Pigray, who relates the circumstance in his work on Surgery, book vii, chapter the tenth, says the visit was made in presence of two counsellors of the court. The witches were all stripped naked, and the physicians examined their bodies very diligently, pricking them in all the marks they could find, to see whether they were insensible to pain, which was always considered a certain proof of guilt. They were, however, very sensible of the pricking, and some of them called out very lustily when the pins were driven into them. "We found them," continues Pierre Pigray, "to be very poor, stupid people, and some of them insane: many of them were quite indifferent about life, and one or two of them desired death as a relief for their sufferings. Our opinion was, that they stood more in need of medicine than of punishment, and so we reported to the Parliament. Their case was, thereupon, taken into further consideration, and the Parliament, after mature counsel amongst all the members, ordered the poor creatures to be sent to their homes, without inflicting any punishment upon them."

Such was the dreadful state of Italy, Germany, and France during the sixteenth century, which was far from being the worst

* Tablier. See also Boguet, "Discours sur les Sorciers;" and M. Jules Garinet, "Histoire de la Magie," page 150.

crisis of the popular madness with regard to witchcraft. Let us see what was the state of England during the same period. The Reformation, which in its progress had rooted out so many errors, stopped short at this, the greatest error of all. Luther and Calvin were as firm believers in witchcraft as Pope Innocent himself, and their followers showed themselves more zealous persecutors than the Romanists. Dr. Hutchinson, in his work on Witchcraft, asserts that the mania manifested itself later in England, and raged with less virulence than on the Continent. The first assertion only is true; but though the persecution began later both in England and Scotland, its progress was as fearful as elsewhere.

It was not until more than fifty years after the issuing of the Bull of Innocent VIII. that the Legislature of England thought fit to make any more severe enactments against sorcery than those already in operation. The statute of 1541 was the first that specified the particular crime of witchcraft. At a much earlier period, many persons had suffered death for sorcery in addition to other offences; but no executions took place for attending the witches' sabbath, raising tempests, afflicting cattle with barrenness, and all the fantastic trumpery of the Continent. Two statutes were passed in 1551; the first, relating to false prophecies, caused mainly, no doubt, by the impositions of Elizabeth Barton, the Holy Maid of Kent, in 1534, and the second against conjuration, witchcraft, and sorcery. But even this enactment did not consider witchcraft as penal in itself, and only condemned to death those who by means of spells, incantations, or contracts with the devil, attempted the lives of their neighbours. The statute of Elizabeth, in 1562, at last recognised witchcraft as a crime of the highest magnitude, whether exerted or not to the injury of the lives, limbs, and possessions of the community. From that date, the persecution may be fairly said to have commenced in England. It reached its climax in the early part of the seventeenth century, which was the hottest period of the mania all over Europe.

A few cases of witch persecution in the sixteenth century will enable the reader to form a more accurate idea of the progress of this great error than if he plunged at once into that busy period of its history when Matthew Hopkins and his coadjutors exercised their infernal calling. Several in-

stances occur in England during the latter years of the reign of Elizabeth. At this time the public mind had become pretty familiar with the details of the crime. Bishop Jewell, in his sermons before Her Majesty, used constantly to conclude them by a fervent prayer that she might be preserved from witches. Upon one occasion, in 1598, his words were, "It may please your Grace to understand that witches and sorcerers, within these last four years, are marvellously increased within this your Grace's realm. Your Grace's subjects pine away even unto the death; their colour fadeth—their flesh rotteth—their speech is benumbed—their senses are bereft! I pray God they may never practise further than upon the *subject!*"

By degrees, an epidemic terror of witchcraft spread into the villages. In proportion as the doctrines of the Puritans took root this dread increased, and, of course, brought persecution in its train. The Church of England has claimed, and is entitled to the merit, of having been less influenced in these matters than any other sect of Christians; but still they were tainted with the superstition of the age. One of the most flagrant instances of cruelty and delusion upon record was consummated under the authority of the Church, and commemorated till a very late period by an annual lecture at the University of Cambridge.

This is the celebrated case of the Witches of Warbois, who were executed about thirty-two years after the passing of the statute of Elizabeth. Although in the interval but few trials are recorded, there is, unfortunately, but too much evidence to show the extreme length to which the popular prejudice was carried. Many women lost their lives in every part of England without being brought to trial at all, from the injuries received at the hands of the people. The number of these can never be ascertained.

The case of the Witches of Warbois merits to be detailed at length, not only from the importance attached to it for so many years by the learned of the University, but from the singular absurdity of the evidence upon which men, sensible in all other respects, could condemn their fellow-creatures to the scaffold.

The principal actors in this strange drama were the families of Sir Samuel Cromwell and a Mr. Throgmorton, both gen-

tlemen of landed property near Warbois, in the county of Huntingdon. Mr. Throgmorton had several daughters, the eldest of whom, Mistress Joan, was an imaginative and melancholy girl, whose head was filled with stories of ghosts and witches. Upon one occasion she chanced to pass the cottage of one Mrs., or, as she was called, Mother Samuel, a very aged, a very poor, and a very ugly woman. Mother Samuel was sitting at her door knitting, with a black cap upon her head, when this silly young lady passed, and taking her eyes from her work, she looked steadfastly at her. Mistress Joan immediately fancied that she felt sudden pains in all her limbs, and from that day forth, never ceased to tell her sisters, and everybody about her, that Mother Samuel had bewitched her. The other children took up the cry, and actually frightened themselves into fits whenever they passed within sight of this terrible old woman.

Mr. and Mrs. Throgmorton, not a whit wiser than their children, believed all the absurd tales they had been told; and Lady Cromwell, a gossip of Mrs. Throgmorton, made herself very active in the business, and determined to bring the witch to the ordeal. The sapient Sir Samuel joined in the scheme; and the children thus encouraged gave loose reins to their imaginations, which seem to have been of the liveliest. They soon invented a whole host of evil spirits, and names for them besides, which, they said, were sent by Mother Samuel to torment them continually. Seven spirits especially, they said, were raised from hell by this wicked woman to throw them into fits; and as the children were actually subject to fits, their mother and her commeres gave the more credit to the story. The names of these spirits were, "First Smack," "Second Smack," "Third Smack," "Blue," "Catch," "Hardname," and "Pluck."

Throgmorton, the father, was so pestered by these idle fancies, and yet so well inclined to believe them, that he marched valiantly forth to the hut where Mother Samuel resided with her husband and daughter, and dragged her forcibly into his own grounds. Lady Cromwell, Mrs. Throgmorton, and the girls were in waiting, armed with long pins to prick the witch, and see if they could draw blood from her. Lady Cromwell, who seems to have been the most violent of the party, tore the old woman's cap off her head, and plucking out a handful of

her gray hair, gave it to Mrs. Throgmorton to burn, as a charm which would preserve them all from her future machinations. It was no wonder that the poor creature, subjected to this rough usage, should give vent to an involuntary curse upon her tormentors. She did so, and her curse was never forgotten. Her hair, however, was supposed to be a grand specific, and she was allowed to depart, half dead with terror and ill usage. For more than a year, the families of Cromwell and Throgmorton continued to persecute her, and to assert that her imps afflicted them with pains and fits, turned the milk sour in their pans, and prevented their cows and ewes from bearing. In the midst of these fooleries, Lady Cromwell was taken ill and died. It was then remembered that her death had taken place exactly a year and a quarter since she was cursed by Mother Samuel, and that on several occasions she had dreamed of the witch and a black cat, the latter being of course the arch-enemy of mankind himself.

Sir Samuel Cromwell now conceived himself bound to take more energetic measures against the sorceress, since he had lost his wife by her means. The year and a quarter and the black cat were proofs positive. All the neighbours had taken up the cry of witchcraft against Mother Samuel; and her personal appearance, unfortunately for her, the very ideal of what a witch ought to be, increased the popular suspicion. It would appear that at last the poor woman believed, even to her own disadvantage, that she was what everybody represented her to be. Being forcibly brought into Mr. Throgmorton's house, when his daughter Joan was in one of her customary fits, she was commanded by him and Sir Samuel Cromwell to expel the devil from the young lady. She was told to repeat her exorcism, and to add, "as I am a witch, and the causer of Lady Cromwell's death, I charge thee, fiend, to come out of her!" She did as was required of her, and moreover confessed that her husband and daughter were leagued with her in witchcraft, and had, like her, sold their souls to the devil. The whole family were immediately arrested, and sent to Huntingdon to prison.

The trial was instituted shortly afterwards before Mr. Justice Fenner, when all the crazy girls of Mr. Throgmorton's family gave evidence against Mother Samuel and her family. They were all three put to the torture. The old woman confessed

in her anguish that she was a witch—that she had cast her spells upon the young ladies, and that she had caused the death of Lady Cromwell. The father and daughter, stronger in mind than their unfortunate wife and parent, refused to confess anything, and asserted their innocence to the last. They were all three condemned to be hanged, and their bodies burned. The daughter, who was young and good-looking, excited the pity of many persons, and she was advised to plead pregnancy, that she might gain at least a respite from death. The poor girl refused proudly, on the ground that she would be accounted both a witch and a strumpet. Her half-witted old mother caught at the idea of a few weeks' longer life, and asserted that she was pregnant. The court was convulsed with laughter, in which the wretched victim herself joined, and this was accounted an additional proof that she was a witch. The whole family were executed on the 7th of April, 1593.

Sir Samuel Cromwell, as lord of the manor, received the sum of 40*l.* out of the confiscated property of the Samuels, which he turned into a rent charge of 40*s.* yearly, for the endowment of an annual sermon or lecture upon the enormity of witchcraft, and this case in particular, to be preached by a doctor or bachelor of divinity of Queen's College, Cambridge. I have not been able to ascertain the exact date at which this annual lecture was discontinued, but it appears to have been preached as late as 1718, when Dr. Hutchinson published his work upon witchcraft.

To carry on in proper chronological order the history of the witch delusion in the British isles, it will be necessary to examine into what was taking place in Scotland during all that part of the sixteenth century anterior to the accession of James VI. to the crown of England. We naturally expect that the Scotch,—a people renowned from the earliest times for their powers of imagination,—should be more deeply imbued with this gloomy superstition than their neighbours of the South. The nature of their soil and climate tended to encourage the dreams of early ignorance. Ghosts, goblins, wraiths, kelpies, and a whole host of spiritual beings, were familiar to the dwellers by the misty glens of the Highlands and the romantic streams of the Lowlands. Their deeds, whether of good or ill, were enshrined in song, and took a

greater hold upon the imagination because "verse had sanctified them." But it was not till the religious reformers began the practice of straining Scripture to the severest extremes, that the arm of the law was called upon to punish witchcraft as a crime *per se*. What Pope Innocent VIII. had done for Germany and France, the preachers of the Reformation did for the Scottish people. Witchcraft, instead of being a mere article of faith, became enrolled in the statute book; and all good subjects and true Christians were called upon to take arms against it. The ninth Parliament of Queen Mary passed an act in 1563, which decreed the punishment of death against witches and consulters with witches, and immediately the whole bulk of the people were smitten with an epidemic fear of the devil and his mortal agents. Persons in the highest ranks of life shared and encouraged the delusion of the vulgar. Many were themselves accused of witchcraft; and noble ladies were shown to have dabbled in mystic arts, and proved to the world that, if they were not witches, it was not for want of the will.

Among the dames who became notorious for endeavouring to effect their wicked ends by the devil's aid, may be mentioned the celebrated Lady Buccleugh, of Branxholme, familiar to all the readers of Sir Walter Scott; the Countess of Lothian, the Countess of Angus, the Countess of Athol, Lady Kerr, the Countess of Huntley, Euphemia Macalzean (the daughter of Lord Cliftonhall), and Lady Fowlis. Among the celebrated of the other sex who were accused of wizzardism was Sir Lewis Ballantyne, the Lord Justice Clerk for Scotland, who, if we may believe Scot of Scotstarvet, "dealt by curiosity with a warlock called Richard Grahame," and prayed him to raise the devil. The warlock consented, and raised him *in propriâ personâ*, in the yard of his house in the Canongate, "at sight of whom the Lord Justice Clerk was so terrified that he took sickness and thereof died." By such idle reports as these did the envious ruin the reputation of those they hated, though it would appear in this case that Sir Lewis had been fool enough to make the attempt of which he was accused, and that the success of the experiment was the only apocryphal part of the story.

The enemies of John Knox invented a similar tale, which found ready credence among the Roman Catholics; glad to

attach any stigma to that grand scourge of the vices of their church. It was reported that he and his secretary went into the churchyard of St. Andrew's with the intent to raise "some sanctes;" but that, by a mistake in their conjurations, they raised the great fiend himself, instead of the saints they wished to consult. The popular rumour added that Knox's secretary was so frightened at the great horns, goggle eyes, and long tail of Satan, that he went mad, and shortly afterwards died. Knox himself was built of sterner stuff, and was not to be frightened.

The first name that occurs in the records of the High Court of Justiciary of persons tried or executed for witchcraft is that of Janet Bowman, in 1572, nine years after the passing of the act of Mary. No particulars of her crimes are given, and against her name there only stand the words, "convict and brynt." It is not, however, to be inferred that, in this interval, no trials or executions took place; for it appears on the authority of documents of unquestioned authenticity in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh,* that the Privy Council made a practice of granting commissions to resident gentlemen and ministers, in every part of Scotland, to examine, try, and execute witches within their own parishes. No records of those who suffered from the sentence of these tribunals have been preserved; but if popular tradition may be believed, even to the amount of one-fourth of its assertions, their number was fearful. After the year 1572, the entries of executions for witchcraft in the records of the High Court become more frequent, but do not average more than one per annum; another proof that trials for this offence were in general entrusted to the local magistracy. The latter appear to have ordered witches to the stake with as little compunction, and after as summary a mode, as modern justices of the peace order a poacher to the stocks.

As James VI. advanced in manhood, he took great interest in the witch trials. One of them especially, that of Gellie Duncan, Dr. Fian, and their accomplices, in the year 1591, engrossed his whole attention, and no doubt suggested in some degree, the famous work on Demonology which he wrote shortly afterwards. As these witches had made an attempt

* Foreign Quarterly Review, vol. vi. page 41.

upon his own life, it is not surprising, with his habits, that he should have watched the case closely, or become strengthened in his prejudice and superstition by its singular details. No other trial that could be selected would give so fair an idea of the delusions of the Scottish people as this. Whether we consider the number of victims, the absurdity of the evidence, and the real villany of some of the persons implicated, it is equally extraordinary.

Gellie Duncan, the prime witch in these proceedings, was servant to the Deputy Bailiff of Tranent, a small town in Haddingtonshire, about ten miles from Edinburgh. Though neither old nor ugly (as witches usually were), but young and good-looking, her neighbours, from some suspicious parts of her behaviour, had long considered her a witch. She had, it appears, some pretensions to the healing art. Some cures which she effected were so sudden, that the worthy Bailiff, her master, who, like his neighbours, mistrusted her, considered them no less than miraculous. In order to discover the truth, he put her to the torture; but she obstinately refused to confess that she had dealings with the devil. It was the popular belief that no witch would confess as long as the mark which Satan had put upon her remained undiscovered upon her body. Somebody present reminded the torturing Bailie of this fact, and on examination, the devil's mark was found upon the throat of poor Gellie. She was put to the torture again, and her fortitude giving way under the extremity of her anguish, she confessed that she was indeed a witch — that she had sold her soul to the devil, and effected all her cures by his aid. This was something new in the witch creed, according to which, the devil delighted more in laying diseases on than in taking them off; but Gellie Duncan fared no better on that account. The torture was still applied, until she had named all her accomplices, among whom were one Cunningham, a reputed wizard, known by the name of Dr. Fian, a grave and matron-like witch, named Agnes Sampson, Euphemia Macalzean, the daughter of Lord Cliftonhall, already mentioned, and nearly forty other persons, some of whom were the wives of respectable individuals in the city of Edinburgh. Every one of these persons were arrested, and the whole realm of Scotland thrown into commotion by the extraordinary nature of the disclosures which were anticipated.

About two years previous to this time, James had suddenly left his kingdom, and proceeded gallantly to Denmark, to fetch over his bride, the Princess of Denmark, who had been detained by contrary weather in the harbour of Upslo. After remaining for some months in Copenhagen, he set sail with his young bride, and arrived safely in Leith, on the 1st of May, 1590, having experienced a most boisterous passage, and been nearly wrecked. As soon as the arrest of Gellie Duncan and Fian became known in Scotland, it was reported by everybody who pretended to be well informed that these witches and their associates had, by the devil's means, raised the storms which had endangered the lives of the King and Queen. Gellie, in her torture, had confessed that such was the fact, and the whole kingdom awaited aghast and open-mouthed for the corroboration about to be furnished by the trial.

Agnes Sampson, the "grave and matron-like" witch implicated by Gellie Duncan, was put to the horrible torture of the *pilliewinkis*. She laid bare all the secrets of the sisterhood before she had suffered an hour, and confessed that Gellie Duncan, Dr. Fian, Marion Lincup, Euphemia Macalzean, herself, and upwards of two hundred witches and warlocks, used to assemble at midnight in the kirk of North Berwick, where they met the devil; that they had plotted there to attempt the King's life; that they were incited to this by the old fiend himself, who had asserted with a thundering oath that James was the greatest enemy he ever had, and that there would be no peace for the devil's children upon earth until he were got rid of; that the devil upon these occasions always liked to have a little music, and that Gellie Duncan used to play a reel before him on a trump or Jew's harp, to which all the witches danced.

James was highly flattered at the idea that the devil should have said that he was the greatest enemy he ever had. He sent for Gellie Duncan to the palace, and made her play before him the same reel which she had played at the witches' dance in the kirk.

Dr. Fian, or rather Cunningham, a petty schoolmaster at Tranent, was put to the torture among the rest. He was a man who had led an infamous life, was a compounder of and dealer in poisons, and a pretender to magic. Though not guilty of the preposterous crimes laid to his charge, there is no doubt

that he was a sorcerer in will, though not in deed, and that he deserved all the misery he endured. When put on the rack, he would confess nothing, and held out so long unmoved, that the severe torture of the *boots* was resolved upon. He endured this until exhausted nature could endure no longer, when Insensibility kindly stepped in to his aid. When it was seen that he was utterly powerless, and that his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth, he was released. Restoratives were administered; and during the first faint gleam of returning consciousness, he was prevailed upon to sign, ere he well knew what he was about, a full confession, in strict accordance with those of Gellie Duncan and Agnes Sampson. He was then remanded to his prison, from which, after two days, he managed, somehow or other, to escape. He was soon recaptured and brought before the Court of Justiciary, James himself being present. Fian now denied all the circumstances of the written confession which he had signed; whereupon the King, enraged at his "stubborn wilfulness," ordered him once more to the torture. His finger nails were riven out with pincers, and long needles thrust up to the eye into the quick; but still he did not wince. He was then consigned again to the *boots*, in which, to quote a pamphlet published at the time,* he continued "so long, and abode so many blows in them, that his legs were crushed and beaten together as small as might be, and the bones and flesh so bruised, that the blood and marrow spouted forth in great abundance, whereby they were made unserviceable for ever."

The astonishing similarity of the confessions of all the persons implicated in these proceedings has often been remarked. It would appear that they actually endeavoured to cause the King's death by their spells and sorceries. Fian, who was acquainted with all the usual tricks of his profession, deceived them with pretended apparitions, so that many of them were really convinced that they had seen the devil. The sum of their confessions was to the following effect:—

Satan, who was, of course, a great foe of the reformed religion, was alarmed that King James should marry a Protestant princess. To avert the consequences to the realms of evil, he had determined to put an end to the King and his bride by raising a storm on their voyage home. Satan, first of all,

* News from Scotland, declaring the damnable life of Dr. Fian.

sent a thick mist over the waters, in the hope that the King's vessel might be stranded on the coast amid the darkness. This failing, Dr. Fian, who, from his superior scholarship, was advanced to the dignity of the devil's secretary, was commanded to summon all the witches to meet their master, each one sailing on a sieve on the high seas.

On All-hallowmas Eve, they assembled to the number of upwards of two hundred, including Gellie Duncan, Agnes Sampson, Euphemia Macalzean, one Barbara Napier, and several warlocks; and each embarking in a riddle, or sieve, they sailed "over the ocean very substantially." After cruising about for some time, they met with the fiend, bearing in his claws a cat, which had been previously drawn nine times through the fire. This he delivered to one of the warlocks, telling him to cast it into the sea, and cry "Hola!" This was done with all solemnity, and immediately the ocean became convulsed—the waters hissed loudly, and the waves rose mountains high,

"Twisting their arms to the dun-coloured heaven."

The witches sailed gallantly through the tempest they had raised, and landing on the coast of Scotland, took their sieves in their hands, and marched on in procession to the haunted kirk of North Berwick, where the devil had resolved to hold a preaching. Gellie Duncan, the musician of the party, tripped on before, playing on her Jew's harp, and singing,

"Cummer, go ye before, Cummer, go ye;
Gif ye will not go before, Cummer, let me!"

Arrived at the kirk, they paced around it *withershins*, that is, in reverse of the apparent motion of the sun. Dr. Fian then blew into the key-hole of the door, which opened immediately, and all the witches entered. As it was pitch dark, Fian blew with his mouth upon the candles, which immediately lighted, and the devil was seen occupying the pulpit. He was attired in a black gown and hat, and the witches saluted him, by crying, "All hail, master!" His body was hard, like iron; his face terrible; his nose, like the beak of an eagle; he had great burning eyes; his hands and legs were hairy; and he

had long claws upon his hands and feet, and spake with an exceedingly gruff voice. Before commencing his sermon, he called over the names of his congregation demanding whether they had been good servants, and what success had attended their operations against the life of the King and his bride.

Gray Meill, a crazy old warlock, who acted as beadle or doorkeeper, was silly enough to answer, "that nothing ailed the King yet, God be thanked;" upon which the devil, in a rage, stepped down from the pulpit, and boxed his ears for him. He then remounted, and commenced the preaching, commanding them to be dutiful servants to him, and do all the evil they could. Euphemia Macalzean and Agnes Sampson, bolder than the rest, asked him whether he had brought the image or picture of King James, that they might, by pricking it, cause pains and diseases to fall upon him. "The father of lies" spoke truth for once, and confessed that he had forgotten it; upon which Euphemia Macalzean upbraided him loudly for his carelessness. The devil, however, took it all in good part, although Agnes Sampson and several other women let loose their tongues at him immediately. When they had done scolding, he invited them all to a grand entertainment. A newly buried corpse was dug up, and divided among them, which was all they had in the way of edibles. He was more liberal in the matter of drink, and gave them so much excellent wine that they soon became jolly. Gellie Duncan then played the old tune upon her trump, and the devil himself led off the dance with Euphemia Macalzean. Thus they kept up the sport till the cock crew.

Agnes Sampson, the wise woman of Keith, as she was called, added some other particulars in her confession. She stated, that on a previous occasion, she had raised an awful tempest in the sea, by throwing a cat into it, with four joints of men tied to its feet. She said also, that on their grand attempt to drown King James, they did not meet with the devil after cruising about, but that he had accompanied them from the first, and that she had seen him dimly in the distance, rolling himself before them over the great waves, in shape and size not unlike a huge haystack. They met with a foreign ship richly laden with wines and other good things, which they boarded, and sunk after they had drunk all the wine, and made themselves quite merry.

Some of these disclosures were too much even for the abundant faith of King James, and he more than once exclaimed, that the witches were like their master, "extreme lyars." But they confessed many other things of a less preposterous nature, and of which they were, no doubt, really guilty. Agnes Sampson said she was to have taken the King's life by anointing his linen with a strong poison. Gellie Duncan used to threaten her neighbours by saying she would send the devil after them; and many persons of weaker minds than usual were frightened into fits by her, and rendered subject to them for the remainder of their lives. Dr. Fian also made no scruple in aiding and abetting murder, and would rid any person of an enemy by means of poison, who could pay him his fee for it. Euphemia Macalzean also was far from being pure. There is no doubt that she meditated the King's death, and used such means to compass it as the superstition of the age directed. She was a devoted partisan of Bothwell, who was accused by many of the witches as having consulted them on the period of the King's death. They were all found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged and burned. Barbara Napier, though found guilty upon other counts, was acquitted upon the charge of having been present at the great witch-meeting in Berwick kirk. The King was highly displeased, and threatened to have the jury indicted for a wilful error upon an assize. They accordingly reconsidered their verdict, and threw themselves upon the King's mercy for the fault they had committed. James was satisfied, and Barbara Napier was hanged along with Gellie Duncan, Agnes Sampson, Dr. Fian, and five-and-twenty others. Euphemia Macalzean met a harder fate. Her connexion with the bold and obnoxious Bothwell, and her share in poisoning one or two individuals who had stood in her way, were thought deserving of the severest punishment the law could inflict. Instead of the ordinary sentence, directing the criminal to be first strangled and then burned, the wretched woman was doomed "to be bound to a stake, and burned in ashes, *quick* to the death." This cruel sentence was executed on the 25th of June, 1591.

These trials had the most pernicious consequences all over Scotland. The lairds and ministers in their districts, armed with due power from the privy council, tried and condemned old women after the most summary fashion. Those who still

clung to the ancient faith of Rome were the severest sufferers, as it was thought, after the disclosures of the fierce enmity borne by the devil towards a Protestant King, and his Protestant wife, that all the Catholics were leagued with the powers of evil to work wo on the realm of Scotland. Upon a very moderate calculation, it is presumed that from the passing of the act of Queen Mary till the accession of James to the throne of England, a period of thirty-nine years, the average number of executions for witchcraft in Scotland was two hundred annually, or upwards of seventeen thousand altogether. For the first nine years the number was not one quarter so great; but towards the years 1590 to 1593, the number must have been more than four hundred. The case last cited was one of an extraordinary character. The general aspect of the trials will be better seen from that of Isabel Gowdie, which, as it would be both wearisome and disgusting to go through them all, is cited as a fair specimen, although it took place at a date somewhat later than the reign of James. This woman, wearied of her life by the persecutions of her neighbours, voluntarily gave herself up to justice, and made a confession, embodying the whole witch-creed of the period. She was undoubtedly a monomaniac of the most extraordinary kind. She said that she deserved to be stretched upon an iron rack, and that her crimes could never be atoned for, even if she were to be drawn asunder by wild horses. She named a long list of her associates, including nearly fifty women and a few warlocks. They dug up the graves of unchristened infants, whose limbs were serviceable in their enchantments. When they wanted to destroy the crops of an enemy, they yoked toads to his plough, and on the following night Satan himself ploughed the land with his team, and blasted it for the season. The witches had power to assume almost any shape; but they generally chose either that of a cat or a hare, oftenest the latter. Isabel said, that on one occasion, when she was in this disguise, she was sore pressed by a pack of hounds, and had a very narrow escape with her life. She reached her own door at last, feeling the hot breath of the pursuing dogs at her haunches. She managed, however, to hide herself behind a chest, and got time to pronounce the magic words that could alone restore her to her proper shape. They were:—

"Hare! Hare!
God send thee care!
I am in a hare's likeness now;
But I shall be a woman e'en now!
Hare! Hare!
God send thee care!"

If witches, when in this shape, were bitten by the dogs, they always retained the marks in their human form; but she had never heard that any witch had been bitten to death. When the devil appointed any general meeting of the witches, the custom was that they should proceed through the air mounted on broomsticks, or on corn or bean-straws, pronouncing as they went:—

"Horse and pattock, horse and go,
Horse and pellats, ho! ho! ho!"

They generally left behind them a broom, or a three-legged stool, which, when placed in their beds and duly charmed, assumed the human shape till their return. This was done that the neighbours might not know when they were absent.

She added, that the devil furnished his favourite witches with servant imps to attend upon them. These imps were called "The Roaring Lion," "Thief of Hell," "Wait-upon-Herself," "Ranting Roarer," "Care-for-Naught," &c., and were known by their liveries, which were generally yellow, sad-dun, sea-green, pea-green, or grass-green. Satan never called the witches by the names they had received at baptism; neither were they allowed, in his presence, so to designate each other. Such a breach of the infernal etiquette assuredly drew down his most severe displeasure. But as some designation was necessary, he re-baptized them in their own blood by the names of "Able-and-Stout," "Over-the-dike-with-it," "Raise-the-wind," "Pickle-nearest-the-wind," "Batter-them-down-Maggy," "Blow-Kale," and such like. The devil himself was not very particular what name they called him so that it was not "Black John." If any witch was unthinking enough to utter these words, he would rush out upon her, and beat and buffet her unmercifully, or tear her flesh with a wool-card. Other names he did not care about; and once gave instructions to a noted warlock that whenever he wanted his aid, he was to

strike the ground three times and exclaim, "Rise up, foul thief!"

Upon this confession many persons were executed. So strong was the popular feeling, that no once accused of witchcraft was acquitted; at least, acquittals did not average one in a hundred trials. Witch-finding, or witch-pricking became a trade, and a set of mercenary vagabonds roamed about the country, provided with long pins to run into the flesh of supposed criminals. It was no unusual thing then, nor is it now, that in aged persons there should be some spot on the body totally devoid of feeling. It was the object of the witch-pricker to discover this spot, and the unhappy wight who did not bleed when pricked upon it, was doomed to the death. If not immediately cast into prison, her life was rendered miserable by the persecution of her neighbours. It is recorded of many poor women, that the annoyances they endured in this way were so excessive, that they preferred death. Sir George Mackenzie, the Lord Advocate, at the time when witch-trials were so frequent, and himself a devout believer in the crime, relates, in his "Criminal Law," first published in 1678, some remarkable instances of it. He says, "I went, when I was a justice-depute, to examine some women who had confessed judicially: and one of them, who was a silly creature, told me, under secrecy, that she had not confessed because she was guilty, but being a poor creature who wrought for her meat, and being defamed for a witch, she knew she should starve; for no person thereafter would either give her meat or lodging, and that all men would beat her and set dogs at her; and that, therefore, she desired to be out of the world; whereupon she wept most bitterly, and upon her knees called God to witness to what she said." Sir George, though not wholly elevated above the prejudices of his age upon this subject, was clear-sighted enough to see the danger to society of the undue encouragement given to the witch-prosecutions. He was convinced that three-fourths of them were unjust and unfounded. He says, in the work already quoted, that the persons who were in general accused of this crime, were poor ignorant men and women, who did not understand the nature of the accusation, and who mistook their own superstitious fears for witchcraft. One poor wretch, a weaver, confessed that he was a warlock, and, being asked why, he replied,

because "he had seen the devil dancing, like a fly, about the candle!" A simple woman, who, because she was called a witch, believed that she was, asked the judge upon the bench, whether a person might be a witch and not know it? Sir George adds, that all the supposed criminals were subjected to severe torture in prison from their gaolers, who thought they did God good service by vexing and tormenting them; "And I know," says this humane and enlightened magistrate, "that this usage was the ground of all their confession; and albeit, the poor miscreants cannot prove this usage, the actors in it being the only witnesses, yet the judge should be jealous of it, as that which did at first elicit the confession, and for fear of which they dare not retract it." Another author,* also a firm believer in witchcraft, gives a still more lamentable instance of a woman who preferred execution as a witch to live on under the imputation. This woman, who knew that three others were to be strangled and burned on an early day, sent for the minister of the parish, and confessed that she had sold her soul to Satan. "Whereupon being called before the judges, she was condemned to die with the rest. Being carried forth to the place of execution, she remained silent during the first, second, and third prayer, and then, perceiving that there remained no more but to rise and go to the stake, she lifted up her body, and, with a loud voice, cried out, 'Now all you that see me this day, know that I am now to die as a witch, by my own confession, and I free all men, especially the ministers and magistrates, of the guilt of my blood. I take it wholly upon myself. My blood be upon my own head. And, as I must make answer to the God of heaven presently, I declare I am as free of witchcraft as any child. But, being delated by a malicious woman, and put in prison under the name of a witch, disowned by my husband and friends, and seeing no ground of hope of ever coming out again, I made up that confession to destroy my own life, being weary of it, and choosing rather to die than to live.' " As a proof of the singular obstinacy and blindness of the believers in witches, it may be stated, that the minister who relates this story only saw in the dying speech of the unhappy woman an additional

* "Satan's Invisible World Discovered," by the Rev. G. Sinclair.

proof that she was a witch. True indeed is it, that "none are so blind as those who will not see."

It is time, however, to return to James VI., who is fairly entitled to share with Pope Innocent, Sprenger, Bodinus, and Matthew Hopkins the glory or the odium of being at the same time a chief enemy and chief encourager of witchcraft. Towards the close of the sixteenth century, many learned men, both on the Continent and in the isles of Britain, had endeavoured to disabuse the public mind on this subject. The most celebrated were Wierus in Germany, Pietro d'Apone in Italy, and Reginald Scot in England. Their works excited the attention of the zealous James, who, mindful of the involuntary compliment which his merits had extorted from the devil, was ambitious to deserve it by still continuing "his greatest enemie." In the year 1597 he published, in Edinburgh, his famous treatise on Demonology. Its design may be gathered from the following passage in the introduction. "The fearful abounding," says the King, "at this time, and in this country, of these detestable slaves of the devil, the witches, or enchanters, hath moved me, beloved reader, to despatch in post this following treatise of mine, not in any wise, as I protest, to serve for a show of mine own learning and ingene (ingenuity), but only (moved of conscience) to press thereby, so far as I can, to resolve the doubting hearts of many; both that such assaults of Satan are most certainly practised, and that the instrument thereof merits most severely to be punished, against the damnable opinions of two, principally in our age, whereof the one, called Scot, an Englishman, is not ashamed, in public print, to deny that there can be such thing as witchcraft, and so maintains the old error of the Sadducees, in denying of spirits. The other, called Wierus, a German physician, sets out a public apology for all these crafts-folks, whereby procuring for them impunity, he plainly betrays himself to have been one of that profession." In other parts of this treatise, which the author had put into the form of a dialogue to "make it more pleasant and facile," he says, "Witches ought to be put to death, according to the law of God, the civil and imperial law, and the municipal law of all Christian nations: yea, to spare the life, and not strike whom God bids strike, and so severely punish in so odious a treason against God, is not only unlawful, but doubtless as great a sin in the magistrate, as was Saul's sparing Agag."

He says also, that the crime is so abominable, that it may be proved by evidence which would not be received against any other offenders,—young children, who knew not the nature of an oath, and persons of an infamous character, being sufficient witnesses against them; but lest the innocent should be accused of a crime so difficult to be acquitted of, he recommends that in all cases the ordeal should be resorted to. He says, "Two good helps may be used: the one is, the finding of their mark, and the trying the insensibleness thereof; the other is their floating on the water; for, as in a secret murther, if the dead carcass be at any time thereafter handled by the murtherer, it will gush out of blood, as if the blood were crying to Heaven for revenge of the murtherer (God having appointed that secret supernatural sign for trial of that secret unnatural crime); so that it appears that God hath appointed (for a supernatural sign of the monstrous impiety of witches) that water shall refuse to receive them in her bosom, that have shaken off them the sacred water of baptism, and wilfully refused the benefit thereof; no, not so much as their eyes are able to shed tears (threaten and torture them as you please), while first they repent (God not permitting them to dissemble their obstinacy in so horrible a crime). Albeit, the womenkind especially, be able otherwise to shed tears at every light occasion, when they will; yea, although it were dissembling, like the crocodiles."

When such doctrines as these were openly promulgated by the highest authority in the realm, and who, in promulgating them, flattered, but did not force the public opinion, it is not surprising that the sad delusion should have increased and multiplied, until the race of wizards and witches replenished the earth. The reputation which he lost by being afraid of a naked sword, he more than regained by his courage in combating the devil. The Kirk showed itself a most zealous coadjutor, especially during those halcyon days when it was not at issue with the King upon other matters of doctrine and prerogative.

On his accession to the throne of England, in 1603, James came amongst a people who had heard with admiration of his glorious deeds against the witches. He himself left no part of his ancient prejudices behind him, and his advent was the signal for the persecution to burst forth in England with a

fury equal to that in Scotland. It had languished a little during the latter years of the reign of Elizabeth; but the very first Parliament of King James brought forward the subject. James was flattered by their promptitude, and the act passed in 1604. On the second reading in the House of Lords, the bill passed into a committee, in which were twelve bishops. By it was enacted, "That if any person shall use, practise, or exercise any conjuration of any wicked or evil spirit, or shall consult, covenant with, or feed any such spirit, the first offence to be imprisonment for a year and standing in the pillory once a quarter; the second offence to be death."

The minor punishment seems but rarely to have been inflicted. Every record that has been preserved, mentions that the witches were hanged and burned, or burned without the previous strangling, "alive and quick." During the whole of James's reign, amid the civil wars of his successor, the sway of the Long Parliament, the usurpation of Cromwell, and the reign of Charles II., there was no abatement of the persecution. If at any time it raged with less virulence, it was when Cromwell and the Independents were masters. Dr. Zachary Grey, the editor of an edition of "Hudibras," informs us, in a note to that work, that he himself perused a list of three thousand witches who were executed in the time of the Long Parliament alone. During the first eighty years of the seventeenth century, the number executed has been estimated at five hundred annually, making the frightful total of forty thousand. Some of these cases deserve to be cited. The great majority resemble closely those already mentioned, but two or three of them let in a new light upon the popular superstition.

Every one has heard of the "Lancashire witches," a phrase now used to compliment the ladies of that county for their bewitching beauty; but it is not every one who has heard the story in which it originated. A villanous boy, named Robinson, was the chief actor in the tragedy. He confessed, many years afterwards, that he had been suborned by his father and other persons to give false evidence against the unhappy witches whom he brought to the stake. The time of this famous trial was about the year 1634. This boy Robinson, whose father was a wood-cutter, residing on the borders

of Pendle Forest, in Lancashire, spread abroad many rumours against one Mother Dickenson, whom he accused of being a witch. These rumours coming to the ears of the local magistracy, the boy was sent for, and strictly examined. He told the following extraordinary story, without hesitation or prevarication, and apparently in so open and honest a manner, that no one who heard him doubted the truth of it:—He said, that as he was roaming about in one of the glades of the forest, amusing himself by gathering blackberries, he saw two greyhounds before him, which he thought at the time belonged to some gentleman of the neighbourhood. Being fond of sport, he proposed to have a course, and a hare being started, he incited the hounds to run. Neither of them would stir. Angry at the beasts, he seized hold of a switch, with which he was about to punish them, when one of them suddenly started up in the form of a woman, and the other of a little boy. He at once recognised the woman to be the witch Mother Dickenson. She offered him some money to induce him to sell his soul to the devil; but he refused. Upon this she took a bridle out of her pocket, and, shaking it over the head of the other little boy, he was instantly turned into a horse. Mother Dickenson then seized him in her arms, sprang upon the horse; and, placing him before her, rode with the swiftness of the wind over forests, fields, bogs, and rivers, until they came to a large barn. The witch alighted at the door; and taking him by the hand, led him inside. There he saw seven old women, pulling at seven halters which hung from the roof. As they pulled, large pieces of meat, lumps of butter, loaves of bread, basins of milk, hot puddings, black puddings, and other rural dainties, fell from the halters on to the floor. While engaged in this charm they made such ugly faces, and looked so fiendish, that he was quite frightened. After they had pulled, in this manner, enough for an ample feast, they set-to, and showed, whatever might be said of the way in which their supper was procured, that their epicurism was a little more refined than that of the Scottish witches, who, according to Gellie Duncan's confession, feasted upon dead men's flesh in the old kirk of Berwick. The boy added, that as soon as supper was ready, many other witches came to partake of it, several of whom he named. In consequence of this story, many persons were arrested, and the boy Robinson was led about from church to

church, in order that he might point out to the officers, by whom he was accompanied, the hags he had seen in the barn. Altogether about twenty persons were thrown into prison; eight of them were condemned to die, including Mother Dickenson, upon this evidence alone, and executed accordingly. Among the wretches who concocted this notable story, not one was ever brought to justice for his perjury; and Robinson, the father, gained considerable sums by threatening persons who were rich enough to buy off exposure.

Among the ill weeds which flourished amid the long dissensions of the civil war, Matthew Hopkins, the witch-finder, stands eminent in his sphere. This vulgar fellow resided, in the year 1644, at the town of Manningtree, in Essex, and made himself very conspicuous in discovering the devil's marks upon several unhappy witches. The credit he gained by his skill in this instance seems to have inspired him to renewed exertions. In the course of a very short time, whenever a witch was spoken of in Essex, Matthew Hopkins was sure to be present, aiding the judges with his knowledge of "such cattle," as he called them. As his reputation increased, he assumed the title of "Witch-finder General," and travelled through the counties of Norfolk, Essex, Huntingdon, and Sussex, for the sole purpose of finding out witches. In one year he brought sixty poor creatures to the stake. The test he commonly adopted was that of swimming, so highly recommended by King James in his "Demonologie." The hands and feet of the suspected persons were tied together crosswise, the thumb of the right hand to the toe of the left foot, and *vice versâ*. They were then wrapped up in a large sheet or blanket, and laid upon their backs in a pond or river. If they sank, their friends and relatives had the poor consolation of knowing they were innocent, but there was an end of them: if they floated, which, when laid carefully on the water was generally the case, there was also an end of them; for they were deemed guilty of witchcraft, and burned accordingly.

Another test was to make them repeat the Lord's prayer and creed. It was affirmed that no witch could do so correctly. If she missed a word, or even pronounced one incoherently, which in her trepidation, it was most probable she would, she was accounted guilty. It was thought that witches could not weep more than three tears, and those only from the

left eye. Thus the conscious innocence of many persons, which gave them fortitude to bear unmerited torture without flinching, was construed by their unmerciful tormentors into proofs of guilt. In some districts the test resorted to was to weigh the culprit against the church Bible. If the suspected witch proved heavier than the Bible, she was set at liberty. This mode was far too humane for the witch-finders by profession. Hopkins always maintained that the most legitimate modes were pricking and swimming.

Hopkins used to travel through his counties like a man of consideration, attended by his two assistants, always putting up at the chief inn of the place, and always at the cost of the authorities. His charges were twenty shillings a town, his expenses of living while there, and his carriage thither and back. This he claimed whether he found witches or not. If he found any, he claimed twenty shillings a head in addition when they were brought to execution. For about three years he carried on this infamous trade, success making him so insolent and rapacious, that high and low became his enemies. The Rev. Mr. Gaul, a clergyman of Houghton, in Huntingdonshire, wrote a pamphlet impugning his pretensions, and accusing him of being a common nuisance. Hopkins replied in an angry letter to the functionaries of Houghton, stating his intention to visit their town; but desiring to know whether it afforded many such sticklers for witchcraft as Mr. Gaul, and whether they were willing to receive and entertain him with the customary hospitality, if he so far honoured them. He added, by way of threat, that in case he did not receive a satisfactory reply, "He would waive their shire altogether, and betake himself to such places where he might do and punish, not only without control, but with thanks and recompense." The authorities of Houghton were not much alarmed at his awful threat of letting them alone. They very wisely took no notice either of him or his letter.

Mr. Gaul describes in his pamphlet one of the modes employed by Hopkins, which was sure to swell his revenues very considerably. It was a proof even more atrocious than the swimming. He says, that the "Witch-finder General" used to take the suspected witch and place her in the middle of a room, upon a stool or table, cross-legged, or in some other uneasy posture. If she refused to sit in this manner, she was

bound with strong cords. Hopkins then placed persons to watch her for four-and-twenty hours, during which time she was to be kept without meat or drink. It was supposed that one of her imps would come during that interval, and suck her blood. As the imp might come in the shape of a wasp, a moth, a fly, or other insect, a hole was made in the door or window to let it enter. The watchers were ordered to keep a sharp look-out, and endeavour to kill any insect that appeared in the room. If any fly escaped, and they could not kill it, the woman was guilty; the fly was her imp, and she was sentenced to be burned, and twenty shillings went into the pockets of Master Hopkins. In this manner he made one old woman confess, because four flies had appeared in the room, that she was attended by four imps, named "Ilemazar," "Pye-wackett," "Peck-in-the-crown," and "Grizel-Greedigut."

It is consoling to think that this impostor perished in his own snare. Mr. Gaul's exposure and his own rapacity weakened his influence among the magistrates; and the populace, who began to find that not even the most virtuous and innocent were secure from his persecution, looked upon him with undisguised aversion. He was beset by a mob, at a village in Suffolk, and accused of being himself a wizard. An old reproach was brought against him, that he had, by means of sorcery, cheated the devil out of a certain memorandum-book, in which he, Satan, had entered the names of all the witches in England. "Thus," said the populace, "you find out witches, not by God's aid, but by the devil's." In vain he denied his guilt. The populace longed to put him to his own test. He was speedily stripped, and his thumbs and toes tied together. He was then placed in a blanket, and cast into a pond. Some say that he floated; and that he was taken out, tried, and executed upon no other proof of his guilt. Others assert that he was drowned. This much is positive, that there was an end of him. As no judicial entry of his trial and execution is to be found in any register, it appears most probable that he expired by the hands of the mob. Butler has immortalized this scamp in the following lines of his "Hudibras;"—

"Hath not this present Parliament
A lieger to the devil sent,
Fully empower'd to treat about
Finding revolted witches out?

And has he not within a year
Hang'd threescore of them in one shire?
Some only for not being drown'd,
And some for sitting above ground
Whole days and nights upon their breeches,
And feeling pain, were hang'd for witches;
And some for putting knavish tricks
Upon green geese or turkey chicks;
Or pigs that suddenly deceased
Of griefs unnatural as he guess'd;
Who proved himself at length a witch,
And made a rod for his own breech."

In Scotland also witch-finding became a trade. They were known under the designation of "common prickers," and, like Hopkins, received a fee for each witch they discovered. At the trial of Janet Peaston, in 1646, the magistrates of Dalkeith "caused John Kincaid, of Tranent, the common pricker, to exercise his craft upon her. He found two marks of the devil's making; for she could not feel the pin when it was put into either of the said marks, nor did the marks bleed when the pin was taken out again. When she was asked where she thought the pins were put in her, she pointed to a part of her body distant from the real place. They were pins of three inches in length."*

These common prickers became at last so numerous, that they were considered nuisances. The judges refused to take their evidence, and in 1678 the privy council of Scotland condescended to hear the complaint of an honest woman, who had been indecently exposed by one of them, and expressed their opinion that common prickers were common cheats.

But such an opinion was not formed in high places before hundreds of innocent persons had fallen victims. The Parliaments had encouraged the delusion both in England and Scotland; and by arming these fellows with a sort of authority, had in a manner forced the magistrates and ministers to receive their evidence. The fate of one poor old gentleman who fell a victim to the arts of Hopkins in 1646, deserves to be recorded. Mr. Louis, a venerable clergyman, upwards of seventy years of age, and who had been rector of Framlingham, in Suffolk, for fifty years, excited suspicion that he was a wizard. Being a violent royalist, he was likely to meet with

* Pitcairn's "Records of Justiciary."

no sympathy at that time; and even his own parishioners, whom he had served so long and so faithfully, turned their backs upon him as soon as he was accused. Placed under the hands of Hopkins, who knew so well how to bring the refractory to confession, the old man, the light of whose intellect had become somewhat dimmed from age, confessed that he was a wizard. He said that he had two imps that continually excited him to do evil; and that one day, when he was walking on the sea-coast, one of them prompted him to express a wish that a ship, whose sails were just visible in the distance, might sink. He consented, and saw the vessel sink before his eyes. He was, upon this confession tried and condemned. On his trial the flame of reason burned up as brightly as ever. He denied all that had been alleged against him, and cross-examined Hopkins with great tact and severity. After his condemnation, he begged that the funeral service of the church might be read for him. The request was refused, and he repeated it for himself from memory, as he was led to the scaffold.

A poor woman in Scotland was executed upon evidence even less strong than this. John Bain, a common pricker, swore that, as he passed her door he heard her talking to the devil. She said in defence, that it was a foolish practice she had of talking to herself, and several of her neighbours corroborated her statement; but the evidence of the pricker was received. He swore that none ever talked to themselves who were not witches. The devil's mark being found upon her, the additional testimony of her guilt was deemed conclusive, and she was "convict and brynt."

From the year 1652 to 1682, these trials diminished annually in number, and acquittals were by no means so rare as they had been. To doubt in witchcraft was no longer dangerous. Before country justices, condemnations of the most absurd evidence was still continued, but when the judges of the land had to charge the jury, they took a more humane and philosophical view. By degrees the educated classes (comprised, in those days, within very narrow limits), openly expressed their unbelief of modern witchcraft, although they were not bold enough to deny its existence altogether. Between them and the believers in the old doctrine fierce arguments ensued, and the sceptics were designated Sadducees. To convince them, the learned and reverend Joseph Glanvil wrote his well-known

work, "Sadducismus Triumphatus," and "The Collection of Relations;" the first part intended as a philosophical inquiry into witchcraft, and the power of the devil "to assume a mortal shape;" the latter containing what he considered a multitude of well-authenticated modern instances.

But though progress was made, it was slow. In 1664, the venerable Sir Matthew Hale condemned two women, named Amy Duny and Rose Cullender, to the stake at St. Edmondsbury, upon evidence the most ridiculous. These two old women, whose ugliness gave their neighbours the first idea that they were witches, went to a shop to purchase herrings, and were refused. Indignant at the prejudice against them, they were not sparing of their abuse. Shortly afterwards, the daughter of the herring-dealer fell sick, and a cry was raised that she was bewitched by the old woman who had been refused the herrings. The girl was subject to epileptic fits. To discover the guilt of Amy Duny and Rose Cullender, the girl's eyes were blinded closely with a shawl, and the witches were commanded to touch her. They did so, and she was immediately seized with a fit. Upon this evidence they were sent to prison. The girl was afterwards touched by an indifferent person, and the force of her imagination was so great, that, thinking it was again the witches, she fell down in a violent fit as before. This, however, was not received in favour of the accused.

The following extract, from the published reports of the trial, will show the sort of evidence which was received:—

"Samuel Pacey, of Leystoff, (a good, sober man,) being sworn, said that, on Thursday the 10th of October last, his younger daughter, Deborah, about nine years old, was suddenly taken so lame that she could not stand on her legs, and so continued till the 17th of the same month, when the child desired to be carried to a bank on the east side of the house, looking towards the sea; and, while she was sitting there, Amy Duny came to this examinant's house to buy some herrings, but was denied. Then she came twice more, but, being as often denied, she went away discontented and grumbling. At this instant of time, the child was taken with terrible fits, complaining of a pain in her stomach, as if she was pricked with pins, shrieking out with a voice like a whelp, and thus continued till the 30th of the same month. This examinant further saith, that Amy Duny, having long

had the reputation of a witch, and his child having, in the intervals of her fits, constantly cried out on her, as the cause of her disorder, saying, that the said Amy did appear to her and fright her, he himself did suspect the said Amy to be a witch, and charged her with being the cause of his child's illness, and set her in the stocks. Two days after, his daughter Elizabeth was taken with such strange fits, that they could not force open her mouth without a tap; and the younger child being in the same condition, they used to her the same remedy. Both children grievously complained that Amy Duny and another woman, whose habit and looks they described, did appear to them, and torment them, and would cry out, 'There stands Amy Duny! There stands Rose Cullender!' the other person who afflicted them. Their fits were not alike. Sometimes they were lame on the right side, sometimes on the left; and sometimes so sore, that they could not bear to be touched. Sometimes they were perfectly well in other respects, but they could not *hear*, at other times, they could not *see*. Sometimes they lost their speech for one, two, and once for eight, days together. At times they had swooning fits, and, when they could speak, were taken with a fit of coughing, and vomited phlegm and crooked pins; and once a great twopenny nail, with above forty pins; which nail he, the examinant, saw vomited up, with many of the pins. The nail and pins were produced in the court. Thus the children continued for two months, during which time the examinant often made them read in the New Testament, and observed, when they came to the words *Lord Jesus*, or *Christ*, they could not pronounce them, but fell into a fit. When they came to the word *Satan*, or *devil*, they would point, and say, 'This bites, but makes me speak right well.' Finding his children thus tormented without hopes of recovery, he sent them to his sister, Margaret Arnold, at Yarmouth, being willing to try whether change of air would help them.

"Margaret Arnold was the next witness. Being sworn, she said, that about the 30th of November, Elizabeth and Deborah Pacey came to her house, with her brother, who told her what had happened, and that he thought his children bewitched. She, this examinant, did not much regard it, supposing the children had played tricks, and put the pins into

their mouths themselves. She, therefore, took all the pins from their clothes, sewing them with thread instead of pinning them. But, notwithstanding, they raised, at times, at least thirty pins, in her presence, and had terrible fits; in which fits they would cry out upon Amy Duny and Rose Cullender, saying, that they saw them and heard them threatening, as before; that they saw things, like mice, running about the house; and one of them catched one, and threw it into the fire, which made a noise, like a rat. Another time the younger child, being out of doors, a thing like a bee would have forced itself into her mouth, at which the child ran screaming into the house, and before this examinant could come at her, fell into a fit, and vomited a twopenny nail, with a broad head. After that, this examinant asked the child how she came by this nail, when she answered, 'The bee brought the nail, and forced it into my mouth.' At other times, the eldest child told this examinant that she saw flies bring her crooked pins. She would then fall into a fit, and vomit such pins. One time the said child said she saw a mouse, and crept under the table to look for it; and afterwards, the child seemed to put something into her apron, saying, 'She had caught it.' She then ran to the fire, and threw it in, on which there did appear to this examinant something like a flash of gunpowder, although she does own she saw nothing in the child's hand. Once the child, being speechless, but otherwise very sensible, ran up and down the house, crying, 'Hush! hush!' as if she had seen poultry; but this examinant saw nothing. At last the child catched at something, and threw it into the fire. Afterwards, when the child could speak, this examinant asked her what she saw at the time? She answered, that she saw a duck. Another time the youngest child said, after a fit, that Amy Duny had been with her, and tempted her to drown herself, or cut her throat, or otherwise destroy herself. Another time they both cried out upon Amy Duny and Rose Cullender, saying, 'Why don't you come yourselves? Why do you send your imps to torment us?'"

The celebrated Sir Thomas Brown, the author of "Vulgar Errors," was also examined as a witness upon the trial. Being desired to give his opinion of the three persons in court, he said, he was clearly of opinion that they were bewitched. He

said, there had lately been a discovery of witches in Denmark, who used the same way of tormenting persons, by conveying crooked pins, needles, and nails into their bodies. That he thought, in such cases, the devil acted upon human bodies by natural means, namely, by exciting and stirring up the superabundant humours, he did afflict them in a more surprising manner by the same diseases their bodies were usually subject to; that these fits might be natural, only raised to a great degree by the subtlety of the devil, co-operating with the malice of these witches.

The evidence being concluded, Sir Matthew Hale addressed the jury. He said, he would waive repeating the evidence, to prevent any mistake, and told the jury, there were two things they had to inquire into. First, Whether or not these children were bewitched; secondly, Whether these women did bewitch them. He said, he did not in the least doubt there were witches; first, Because the Scriptures affirmed it; secondly, Because the wisdom of all nations, particularly our own, had provided laws against witchcraft, which implied their belief of such a crime. He desired them strictly to observe the evidence, and begged of God to direct their hearts in the weighty concern they had in hand, since, to condemn the innocent and let the guilty go free, are both an abomination to the Lord.

The jury then retired, and, in about half an hour, returned a verdict of guilty upon all the indictments, being thirteen in number. The next morning the children came with their father to the lodgings of Sir Matthew Hale, very well, and quite restored to their usual health. Mr. Pacey, being asked at what time their health began to improve, replied, that they were quite well in half an hour after the conviction of the prisoners.

Many attempts were made to induce the unfortunate women to confess their guilt; but in vain, and they were both hanged.

Eleven trials were instituted before Chief-Justice Holt for witchcraft between the years 1694 and 1701. The evidence was of the usual character; but Holt appealed so successfully in each case to the common sense of the jury, that they were every one acquitted. A general feeling seemed to pervade the country that blood enough had been shed upon these absurd charges. Now and then, the flame of persecution

burnt up in a remote district; but these instances were no longer looked upon as mere matters of course. They appear, on the contrary, to have excited much attention; a sure proof, if no other were to be obtained, that they were becoming unfrequent.

A case of witchcraft was tried in 1711, before Lord Chief Justice Powell; in which, however, the jury persisted in a verdict of guilty, though the evidence was of the usual absurd and contradictory character, and the enlightened judge did all in his power to bring them to a right conclusion. The accused person was one Jane Wenham, better known as the Witch of Walkerne; and the persons who were alleged to have suffered from her witchcraft were two young women, named Thorne and Street. A witness, named Mr. Arthur Chauncy, deposed, that he had seen Ann Thorne in several of her fits, and that she always recovered upon prayers being said, or if Jane Wenham came to her. He related, that he had pricked the prisoner several times in the arms, but could never fetch any blood from her; that he had seen her vomit pins, when there were none in her clothes or within her reach; and that he had preserved several of them, which he was ready to produce. The judge, however, told him that was needless, *as he supposed they were crooked pins.*

Mr. Francis Bragge, another witness, deposed, that strange "cakes" of bewitched feathers having been taken from Ann Thorne's pillow, he was anxious to see them. He went into a room where some of these feathers were, and took two of the cakes, and compared them together. They were both of a circular figure, something larger than a crown piece; and he observed that the small feathers were placed in a nice and curious order, at equal distances from each other, making so many radii of the circle, in the centre of which the quill ends of the feathers met. He counted the number of these feathers, and found them to be exactly thirty-two in each cake. He afterwards endeavoured to pull off two or three of them, and observed that they were all fastened together by a sort of viscous matter, which would stretch seven or eight times in a thread before it broke. Having taken off several of these feathers, he removed the viscous matter with his fingers, and found under it, in the centre, some short hairs, black and gray, matted together, which he verily believed to

be cat's hair. He also said, that Jane Wenham confessed to him that she had bewitched the pillow, and had practised witchcraft for sixteen years.

The judge interrupted the witness at this stage, and said, he should very much like to see an enchanted feather, and seemed to wonder when he was told that none of these strange cakes had been preserved. His Lordship asked the witness why he did not keep one or two of them, and was informed that they had all been burnt, in order to relieve the bewitched person of the pains she suffered, which could not be so well effected by any other means.

A man, named Thomas Ireland, deposed, that hearing several times a great noise of cats crying and screaming about his house, he went out and frightened them away, and they all ran towards the cottage of Jane Wenham. One of them he swore positively had a face very like Jane Wenham's. Another man, named Burville, gave similar evidence, and swore that he had often seen a cat with Jane Wenham's face. Upon one occasion he was in Ann Thorne's chamber, when several cats came in, and among them the cat above stated. This witness would have favoured the court with a much longer statement, but was stopped by the judge, who said he had heard quite enough.

The prisoner in her defence, said nothing, but that "she was a clear woman." The learned judge then summed up, leaving it to the jury to determine whether such evidence as they had heard was sufficient to take away the prisoner's life upon the indictment. After a long deliberation they brought in their verdict, that she was guilty upon the evidence. The Judge then asked them whether they found her guilty upon the indictment of conversing with the devil in the shape of a cat? The sapient foreman very gravely answered, "We find her guilty of *that*." The learned judge then very reluctantly proceeded to pass sentence of death; but, by his persevering exertions, a pardon was at last obtained, and the wretched old woman was set at liberty.

In the year 1716, a woman and her daughter,—the latter only nine years of age,—were hanged at Huntingdon for selling their souls to the devil, and raising a storm by pulling off their stockings and making a lather of soap. This appears to have been the last judicial execution in England. From

that time to the year 1736, the populace raised at intervals the old cry, and more than once endangered the lives of poor women by dragging them through ponds on suspicion; but the philosophy of those who, from their position, sooner or later give the tone to the opinions and morals of the poor, was silently working a cure for the evil. The fear of witches ceased to be epidemic, and became individual, lingering only in minds fettered by inveterate prejudice or brutalizing superstition. In the year 1736, the penal statute of James I. was finally blotted from the statute-book, and suffered no longer to disgrace the advancing intelligence of the country. Pretenders to witchcraft, fortune-tellers, conjurors, and all their train, were liable only to the common punishment of rogues and impostors—imprisonment and the pillory.

In Scotland, the delusion also assumed the same phases, and was gradually extinguished in the light of civilization. As in England the progress of improvement was slow. Up to the year 1665, little or no diminution of the mania was perceptible. In 1643, the General Assembly recommended that the Privy Council should institute a standing commission, composed of any "understanding gentlemen or magistrates," to try the witches, who were stated to have increased enormously of late years. In 1649, an act was passed, confirmatory of the original statute of Queen Mary, explaining some points of the latter which were doubtful, and enacting severe penalties, not only against witches themselves, but against all who covenanted with them, or sought by their means to pry into the secrets of futurity, or cause any evil to the life, lands, or limbs of their neighbours. For the next ten years, the popular madness upon this subject was perhaps more furious than ever; upwards of four thousand persons suffered for the crime during that interval. This was the consequence of the act of parliament and the unparalleled severity of the magistrates; the latter frequently complained that for two witches they burned one day, there were ten to burn the next: they never thought that they themselves were the cause of the increase. In a single circuit, held at Glasgow, Ayr, and Stirling, in 1659, seventeen unhappy creatures were burned by judicial sentence for trafficking with Satan. In one day, (November 7, 1661,) the Privy Council issued no less than fourteen commissions for trials in the provinces. Next year,

the violence of the persecution seems to have abated. From 1662 to 1668, although "the understanding gentlemen and magistrates," already mentioned, continued to try and condemn, the High Court of Justiciary had but one offender of this class to deal with, and she was acquitted. James Welsh, a common pricker, was ordered to be publicly whipped through the streets of Edinburgh for falsely accusing a woman of witchcraft; a fact which alone proves that the superior court sifted the evidence in these cases with much more care and severity than it had done a few years previously. The enlightened Sir George Mackenzie, styled by Dryden, "the noble wit of Scotland," laboured hard to introduce this rule into court—that the confessions of the witches should be held of little worth, and that the evidence of the prickers and other interested persons should be received with distrust and jealousy. This was reversing the old practice, and saved many innocent lives. Though a firm believer both in ancient and modern witchcraft, he could not shut his eyes to the atrocities daily committed under the name of justice. In his work on the Criminal Law of Scotland, published in 1678, he says, "From the horridness of this crime, I do conclude that, of all others, it requires the clearest relevancy and most convincing probature; and I condemn, next to the wretches themselves, those cruel and too forward judges who burn persons by thousands as guilty of this crime." In the same year, Sir John Clerk plumply refused to serve as a commissioner on trials for witchcraft, alleging, by way of excuse, "that he was not himself good conjuror enough to be duly qualified." The views entertained by Sir George Mackenzie were so favourably received by the Lords of Session that he was deputed, in 1680, to report to them on the cases of a number of poor women who were then in prison awaiting their trial. Sir George stated that there was no evidence against them whatever but their own confessions, which were absurd and contradictory, and drawn from them by severe torture. They were immediately discharged.

For the next sixteen years, the Lords of Session were unoccupied with trials for witchcraft; not one is entered upon the record: but in 1697, a case occurred, which equalled in absurdity any of those that signalized the dark reign of King James. A girl, named Christiana Shaw, eleven years of age,

the daughter of John Shaw of Bargarran, was subject to fits, and being of a spiteful temper, she accused her maid-servant, with whom she had frequent quarrels, of bewitching her. Her story, unfortunately, was believed. Encouraged to tell all the persecutions of the devil which the maid had sent to torment her, she in the end concocted a romance that involved twenty-one persons. There was no other evidence against them but the fancies of this lying child, and the confessions which pain had extorted from them; but upon this no less than five women were condemned, before Lord Blantyre and the rest of the Commissioners, appointed specially by the Privy Council to try this case. They were burned on the Green at Paisley. The warlock of the party, one John Reed, who was also condemned, hanged himself in prison. It was the general belief in Paisley that the devil had strangled him, lest he should have revealed in his last moments too many of the unholy secrets of witchcraft. This trial excited considerable disgust in Scotland. The Rev. Mr. Bell, a contemporary writer, observed that, in this business, "persons of more goodness and esteem than most of their calumniators were defamed for witches." He adds, that the persons chiefly to blame were "certain ministers of too much forwardness and absurd credulity, and some topping professors in and about Glasgow."*

After this trial, there again occurs a lapse of seven years, when the subject was painfully forced upon public attention by the brutal cruelty of the mob at Pittenween. Two women were accused of having bewitched a strolling beggar, who was subject to fits, or who pretended to be so, for the purpose of exciting commiseration. They were cast into prison, and tortured until they confessed. One of them, named Janet Cornfoot, contrived to escape, but was brought back to Pittenween next day by a party of soldiers. On her approach to the town, she was, unfortunately, met by a furious mob, composed principally of fishermen and their wives, who seized upon her with the intention of swimming her. They forced her away to the sea-shore, and tying a rope around her body, secured the end of it to the mast of a fishing-boat lying alongside. In this manner they ducked her several times. When she was half dead, a sailor in the boat cut away the rope, and

* Preface to "Law's Memorials," edited by Sharpe.

the mob dragged her through the sea to the beach. Here, as she lay quite insensible, a brawny ruffian took down the door of his hut, close by, and placed it on her back. The mob gathered large stones from the beach, and piled them upon her till the wretched woman was pressed to death. No magistrate made the slightest attempt to interfere, and the soldiers looked on, delighted spectators. A great outcry was raised against this culpable remissness, but no judicial inquiry was set on foot. This happened in 1704.

The next case we hear of is that of Elspeth Rule, found guilty of witchcraft before Lord Anstruther at the Dumfries circuit, in 1708. She was sentenced to be marked in the cheek with a redhot iron, and banished the realm of Scotland for life.

Again there is a long interval. In 1718, the remote county of Caithness, where the delusion remained in all its pristine vigour for years after it had ceased elsewhere, was startled from its propriety by the cry of witchcraft. A silly fellow, named William Montgomery, a carpenter, had a mortal antipathy to cats, and, somehow or other, these animals generally chose his back-yard as the scene of their caterwaulings. He puzzled his brains for a long time to know why he, above all his neighbours, should be so pestered; at last he came to the sage conclusion that his tormentors were no cats, but witches. In this opinion he was supported by his maid-servant, who swore a round oath that she had often heard the aforesaid cats talking together in human voices. The next time the unlucky tabbies assembled in his back-yard, the valiant carpenter was on the alert. Arming himself with an axe, a dirk, and a broad-sword, he rushed out among them: one of them he wounded in the back, a second in the hip, and the leg of a third he maimed with his axe; but he could not capture any of them. A few days afterwards, two old women of the parish died, and it was said that, when their bodies were laid out, there appeared on the back of one the mark as of a recent wound, and a similar scar upon the hip of the other. The carpenter and his maid were convinced that they were the very cats, and the whole county repeated the same story. Every one was upon the look-out for proofs corroborative; a very remarkable one was soon discovered. Nanny Gilbert, a wretched old creature of upwards of seventy years of age, was

found in bed with her leg broken; as she was ugly enough for a witch, it was asserted that she, also, was one of the cats that had fared so ill at the hands of the carpenter. The latter, when informed of the popular suspicion, asserted that he distinctly remembered to have struck one of the cats a blow with the back of his broadsword, which ought to have broken her leg. Nanny was immediately dragged from her bed, and thrown into prison. Before she was put to the torture, she explained, in a very natural and intelligible manner, how she had broken her limb; but this account did not give satisfaction; the professional persuasions of the torturer made her tell a different tale, and she confessed that she was indeed a witch, and had been wounded by Montgomery on the night stated—that the two old women recently deceased were witches also, besides about a score of others whom she named. The poor creature suffered so much by the removal from her own home, and the tortures inflicted upon her, that she died the next day in prison. Happily for the persons she had named in her confession, Dundas of Arniston, at that time the King's Advocate-general, wrote to the Sheriff-depute, one Captain Ross of Littledean, cautioning him not to proceed to trial, the "thing being of too great difficulty, and beyond the jurisdiction of an inferior court." Dundas himself examined the precognition with great care, and was so convinced of the utter folly of the whole case that he quashed all further proceedings.

We find this same Sheriff-depute of Caithness very active four years afterwards in another trial for witchcraft. In spite of the warning he had received, that all such cases were to be tried in future by the superior courts, he condemned to death an old woman at Dornoch, upon the charge of bewitching the cows and pigs of her neighbours. This poor creature was insane, and actually laughed and clapped her hands at sight of "the bonnie fire" that was to consume her. She had a daughter, who was lame both of her hands and feet, and one of the charges brought against her was, that she had used this daughter as a pony in her excursions to join the devil's sabbath, and that the devil himself had shod her, and produced lameness.

This was the last execution that took place in Scotland for witchcraft. The penal statutes were repealed in 1736, and, as in England, whipping, the pillory, or imprisonment, were

declared the future punishments of all pretenders to magic or witchcraft.

Still, for many years after this, the superstition lingered both in England and Scotland, and in some districts is far from being extinct even at this day. But before we proceed to trace it any further than to its legal extinction, we have yet to see the frightful havoc it made in continental Europe from the commencement of the seventeenth to the middle of the eighteenth century. France, Germany, and Switzerland were the countries which suffered most from the epidemic. The number of victims in these countries during the sixteenth century has already been mentioned; but, at the early part of the seventeenth, the numbers are so great, especially in Germany, that were they not to be found in the official records of the tribunals, it would be almost impossible to believe that mankind could ever have been so maddened and deluded. To use the words of the learned and indefatigable Horst,* "the world seemed to be like a large madhouse for witches and devils to play their antics in." Satan was believed to be at everybody's call, to raise the whirlwind, draw down the lightning, blight the productions of the earth, or destroy the health and paralyse the limbs of man. This belief, so insulting to the majesty and beneficence of the Creator, was shared by the most pious ministers of religion. Those who in their morning and evening prayers acknowledged the one true God, and praised him for the blessings of the seed-time and the harvest, were convinced that frail humanity could enter into a compact with the spirits of hell to subvert his laws and thwart all his merciful intentions. Successive popes, from Innocent VIII. downwards, promulgated this degrading doctrine, which spread so rapidly that society seemed to be divided into two great factions, the bewitching and the bewitched.

The commissioners named by Innocent VIII. to prosecute the witch-trials in Germany, were Jacob Sprenger, so notorious for his work on demonology, entitled the "Malleus Maleficarum," or "Hammer to knock down Witches," Henry Institor, a learned jurisconsult, and the Bishop of Strasburgh. Bamberg, Trèves, Cologne, Paderborn, and Würzburg, were the chief seats of the commissioners, who, during their lives

* Zauber Bibliothek. Theil 5.

alone, condemned to the stake, on a very moderate calculation, upwards of three thousand victims. The number of witches so increased, that new commissioners were continually appointed in Germany, France, and Switzerland. In Spain and Portugal the Inquisition alone took cognizance of the crime. It is impossible to search the records of those dark, but now happily non-existing tribunals; but the mind recoils with affright even to form a guess of the multitudes who perished.

The mode of trial in the other countries is more easily ascertained. Sprenger, in Germany, and Bodinus and Delrio, in France, have left but too ample a record of the atrocities committed in the much-abused names of justice and religion. Bodinus, of great repute and authority in the seventeenth century, says, "The trial of this offence must not be conducted like other crimes. Whoever adheres to the ordinary course of justice perverts the spirit of the law, both divine and human. He who is accused of sorcery should never be acquitted unless the malice of the prosecutor be clearer than the sun; for it is so difficult to bring full proof of this secret crime, that out of a million of witches not one would be convicted if the usual course were followed!" Henri Boguet, a witch-finder, who styled himself "The Grand Judge of Witches for the Territory of St. Claude," drew up a code for the guidance of all persons engaged in the witch-trials, consisting of seventy articles, quite as cruel as the code of Bodinus. In this document he affirms, that a mere suspicion of witchcraft justifies the immediate arrest and torture of the suspected person. If the prisoner muttered, looked on the ground, and did not shed any tears, all these were proofs positive of guilt! In all cases of witchcraft, the evidence of the child ought to be taken against its parent; and persons of notoriously bad character, although not to be believed upon their oaths on the ordinary occasions of dispute that might arise between man and man, were to be believed, if they swore that any person had bewitched them! Who, when he hears that this diabolical doctrine was the universally received opinion of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities, can wonder that thousands upon thousands of unhappy persons should be brought to the stake? that Cologne should for many years burn its three hundred witches annually? the district of Bam-

berg its four hundred? Nuremberg, Geneva, Paris, Toulouse, Lyons, and other cities, their two hundred?

A few of these trials may be cited, taking them in the order of priority, as they occurred in different parts of the Continent. In 1595 an old woman residing in a village near Constance, angry at not being invited to share the sports of the country people on a day of public rejoicing, was heard to mutter something to herself, and was afterwards seen to proceed through the fields towards a hill, where she was lost sight of. A violent thunder-storm arose about two hours afterwards, which wet the dancers to the skin and did considerable damage to the plantations. This woman, suspected before of witchcraft, was seized and imprisoned, and accused of having raised the storm, by filling a hole with wine, and stirring it about with a stick. She was tortured till she confessed, and was burned alive the next evening.

About the same time two sorcerers in Toulouse were accused of having dragged a crucifix about the streets at midnight, stopping at times to spit upon and kick it, and uttering at intervals an exorcism to raise the devil. The next day a hail-storm did considerable damage to the crops, and a girl, the daughter of a shoemaker in the town, remembered to have heard in the night the execrations of the wizards. Her story led to their arrest. The usual means to produce confession were resorted to. The wizards owned that they could raise tempests whenever they pleased, and named several persons who possessed similar powers. They were hanged, and then burned in the market-place, and seven of the persons they had mentioned shared the same fate.

Hoppo and Stadlin, two noted wizards of Germany, were executed in 1599. They implicated twenty or thirty witches, who went about causing women to miscarry, bringing down the lightning of heaven, and making maidens bring forth toads. To this latter fact several girls were found to swear most positively! Stadlin confessed that he had killed seven infants in the womb of one woman.

Bodinus highly praises the exertions of a witch-finder, named Nider, in France, who prosecuted so many that he could not calculate them. Some of these witches could, by a single word, cause people to fall down dead; others made women go with child three years instead of nine months; while others,

by certain invocations and ceremonies, could turn the faces of their enemies upside down, or twist them round to their backs. Although no witness was ever procured who saw persons in this horrible state, the witches confessed that they had the power and exercised it. Nothing more was wanting to insure the stake.

At Amsterdam a crazy girl confessed that she could cause sterility in cattle, and bewitch pigs and poultry by merely repeating the magic words *Turius und Shurius Inturius!* She was hanged and burned. Another woman in the same city, named Kornelis Van Purmerund was arrested in consequence of some disclosures the former had made. A witness came forward and swore that she one day looked through the window of her hut, and saw Kornelis sitting before a fire muttering something to the devil. She was sure it was to the devil, because she heard him answer her. Shortly afterwards twelve black cats ascended out of the floor, and danced on their hind legs around the witch for the space of about half an hour. They then vanished with a horrid noise, and leaving a disagreeable smell behind them. She also was hanged and burned.

At Bamberg, in Bavaria, the executions from the year 1610 to 1640 were at the rate of about a hundred annually. One woman, suspected of witchcraft, was seized because, having immoderately praised the beauty of a child, it had shortly afterwards fallen ill and died. She confessed upon the rack that the devil had given her the power to work evil upon those she hated, by speaking words in their praise. If she said with unwonted fervour, "What a strong man!" "What a lovely woman!" "What a sweet child!" the devil understood her, and afflicted them with diseases immediately. It is quite unnecessary to state the end of this poor creature. Many women were executed for causing strange substances to lodge in the bodies of those who offended them. Bits of wood, nails, hair, egg-shells, bits of glass, shreds of linen and woollen cloth, pebbles, and even hot cinders and knives, were the articles generally chosen. These were believed to remain in the body till the witches confessed or were executed, when they were voided from the bowels, or by the mouth, nostrils, or ears. Modern physicians have often had cases of a similar description under their care, where girls have swallowed needles, which have been voided on the arms, legs, and other parts of the body. But the science of

that day could not account for these phenomena otherwise than by the power of the devil; and every needle swallowed by a servant-maid cost an old woman her life. Nay, if no more than one suffered in consequence, the district might think itself fortunate. The commissioners seldom stopped short at one victim. The revelations of the rack in most cases implicated half a score.

Of all the records of the witch-trials preserved for the wonder of succeeding ages, that of Würzburg, from 1627 to 1629, is the most frightful. Hauber, who has preserved this list in his "Acta et Scripta Magica," says, in a note at the end, that it is far from complete, and that there were a great many other burnings too numerous to specify. This record, which relates to the city only, and not to the province of Würzburg, contains the names of one hundred and fifty-seven persons, who were burned in two years in twenty-nine burnings, averaging from five to six at a time. The list comprises three play-actors, four innkeepers, three common councilmen of Würzburg, fourteen vicars of the cathedral, the burgomaster's lady, an apothecary's wife and daughter, two choristers of the cathedral, Göbel Babelin, the prettiest girl in the town, and the wife, the two little sons, and the daughter of the councillor Stolzenberg. Rich and poor, young and old, suffered alike. At the seventh of these recorded burnings, the victims are described as a wandering boy, twelve years of age, and four strange men and women, found sleeping in the market-place. Thirty-two of the whole number appear to have been vagrants, of both sexes, who, failing to give a satisfactory account of themselves, were accused and found guilty of witchcraft. The number of children on the list is horrible to think upon. The thirteenth and fourteenth burnings comprised four persons, who are stated to have been a little maiden nine years of age, a maiden still less, her sister, their mother, and their aunt, a pretty young woman of twenty-four. At the eighteenth burning the victims were two boys of twelve, and a girl of fifteen; at the nineteenth, the young heir of the noble house of Rotenhahn, aged nine, and two other boys, one aged ten, and the other twelve. Among other entries appear the names of Baunach, the fattest, and Steinacher, the richest burgher in Würzburg. What tended to keep up the delusion in this unhappy city,

and indeed all over Europe, was the number of hypochondriac and diseased persons who came voluntarily forward, and made confession of witchcraft. Several of the victims in the foregoing list, had only themselves to blame for their fate. Many again, including the apothecary's wife and daughter already mentioned, pretended to sorcery, and sold poisons, or attempted by means of charms and incantations to raise the devil. But throughout all this fearful period the delusion of the criminals was as great as that of the judges. Depraved persons who, in ordinary times, would have been thieves or murderers, added the desire of sorcery to their depravity, sometimes with the hope of acquiring power over their fellows, and sometimes with the hope of securing impunity in this world by the protection of Satan. One of the persons executed at the first burning, a prostitute, was heard repeating the exorcism, which was supposed to have the power of raising the arch enemy in the form of a goat. This precious specimen of human folly has been preserved by Horst, in his "Zauberbibliothek." It ran as follows, and was to be repeated slowly, with many ceremonies and waivings of the hand:—

"Lalle, Bachera, Magotte, Baphia, Dajam,
Vagoth Heneche Ammi Nagaz, Adomator,
Raphael Immanuel Christus, Tetragrammaton
Agra Jod Loi. König! König!"

The two last words were uttered quickly, and with a sort of scream, and were supposed to be highly agreeable to Satan, who loved to be called a king. If he did not appear immediately, it was necessary to repeat a further exorcism. The one in greatest repute was as follows, and was to be read backwards, with the exception of the last two words:

"Anion, Lalle, Sabolos, Sado, Pater, Aziel
Adonai Sado Vagoth Agra, Jod,
Baphra! Komm! Komm!"

When the witch wanted to get rid of the devil, who was sometimes in the habit of prolonging his visits to an unconscionable length, she had only to repeat the following, also backwards, when he generally disappeared, leaving behind him a suffocating smell:

"Zellianelle Heotti Bonus Vagotha
Plisos sother osech unicus Beelzebub
Dax! Komm! Komm!"

This nonsensical jargon soon became known to all the idle and foolish boys of Germany. Many an unhappy urchin, who in a youthful frolic had repeated it, paid for his folly the penalty of his life. Three, whose ages varied from ten to fifteen, were burned alive at Würzburg for no other offence. Of course every other boy in the city became still more convinced of the power of the charm. One boy confessed that he would willingly have sold himself to the devil, if he could have raised him, for a good dinner and cakes every day of his life, and a pony to ride upon. This luxurious youngster, instead of being horsewhipped for his folly, was hanged and burned.

The small district of Lindheim was, if possible, even more notorious than Würzburg for the number of its witch-burnings. In the year 1633 a famous witch named Pomp Anna, who could cause her foes to fall sick by merely looking at them, was discovered and burned, along with three of her companions. Every year in this parish, consisting at most of a thousand persons, the average number of executions was five. Between the years 1660 and 1664, the number consumed was thirty. If the executions all over Germany had been in this frightful proportion, hardly a family could have escaped losing one of its members.

In 1627, a ballad entitled the "Druten Zeitung," or the "Witches Gazette," was very popular in Germany. It detailed, according to the title-page of a copy printed at Smalcald in 1627, "an account of the remarkable events which took place in Franconia, Bamberg, and Würzburg, with those wretches who from avarice or ambition have sold themselves to the devil, and how they had their reward at last: set to music, and to be sung to the tune of Dorothea." The sufferings of the witches at the stake are explained in it with great minuteness, the poet waxing extremely witty when he describes the horrible contortions of pain upon their countenances, and the shrieks that rent the air when any one of more than common guilt was burned alive. A trick resorted to in order to force one witch to confess, is told in this doggerel as an excellent joke. As she obstinately refused to own that she was in

league with the powers of evil, the commissioner suggested that the hangman should dress himself in a bear's skin, with the horns, tail, and all the et ceteras, and in this form penetrate into her dungeon. The woman, in the darkness of her cell, could not detect the imposture, aided as it was by her own superstitious fears. She thought she was actually in the presence of the prince of hell; and when she was told to keep up her courage, and that she should be relieved from the power of her enemies, she fell on her knees before the supposed devil, and swore to dedicate herself hereafter body and soul to his service. Germany is, perhaps, the only country in Europe where the delusion was so great as to have made such detestable verses as these the favourites of the people :—

"Man shickt ein Henkersknecht
Zu ihr in Gefängniss n'unter,
Den man hat kleidet recht,
Mit einer Bärnhaute,
Als wenns der Teufel wär;
Als ihm die Drut anschaute
Meints ihr Buhl kam daher.

"Sie sprach zu ihm behende,
Wie lässt du mich so lang
In der Obrigkeit Hände?
Hilf mir aus ihren Zwang,
Wie du mir hast verheisen,
Ich bin ja eben dein,
Thu mich aus der Angst entreissen
O leibster Buhle mein!"*

This rare poet adds, that in making such an appeal to the hangman, the witch never imagined the roast that was to be made of her, and puts in, by way of parenthesis, "was not that fine fun!" "*Was das war für ein Spiel!*" As feathers thrown into the air show how the wind blows, so this trumpery ballad shows the current of popular feeling at the time of its composition.

All readers of history are familiar with the celebrated trial

* They sent a hangman's assistant down to her in her prison; they clothed him properly in a bear's skin, as if he were the devil. Him, when the witch saw, she thought he was her familiar. She said to him quickly, "Why hast thou left me so long in the magistrate's hands? Help me out of their power, as thou hast promised, and I will be thine alone. Help me from this anguish, O thou dearest devil [or lover] mine!"

of the Maréchale d'Ancre, who was executed in Paris in the year 1617. Although witchcraft was one of the accusations brought against her, the real crime for which she suffered was her ascendency over the mind of Mary of Medicis, and the consequent influence she exercised indirectly over the unworthy King, Louis XIII. Her coachman gave evidence that she had sacrificed a cock at midnight, in one of the churches, and others swore they had seen her go secretly into the house of a noted witch, named Isabella. When asked by what means she had acquired so extraordinary an influence over the mind of the Queen Mother, she replied boldly, that she exercised no other power over her, than that which a strong mind can always exercise over the weak. She died with great firmness.

In two years afterwards scenes far more horrible than any that had yet taken place in France were enacted at Labourt, at the foot of the Pyrenees. The Parliament of Bourdeaux, scandalized at the number of witches who were said to infest Labourt and its neighbourhood, deputed one of its own members, the noted Pierre de l'Ancre, and its President, Espaignel, to inquire into the matter, with full powers to punish the offenders. They arrived at Labourt in May 1619. De l'Ancre wrote a book, setting forth all his great deeds, in this battle against the powers of evil. It is full of obscenity and absurdity; but the facts may be relied on as far as they relate to the number of trials and executions, and the strange confessions which torture forced from the unhappy criminals.

De l'Ancre states as a reason why so many witches were to be found at Labourt, that the country was mountainous and sterile! He discovered many of them from their partiality to smoking tobacco. It may be inferred from this that he was of the opinion of King James, that tobacco was the "devil's weed." When the commission first sat, the number of persons brought to trial was about forty a day. The acquittals did not average so many as five per cent. All the witches confessed that they had been present at the great Domdaniel, or Sabbath. At these saturnalia the devil sat upon a large gilded throne, sometimes in the form of a goat; sometimes as a gentleman, dressed all in black, with boots, spurs, and sword; and very often as a shapeless mass, resembling the trunk of a blasted tree, seen indistinctly amid the darkness. They generally proceeded to the Domdaniel riding on spits, pitchforks, or broomsticks, and,

on their arrival, indulged with the fiends in every species of debauchery. Upon one occasion they had the audacity to celebrate this festival in the very heart of the city of Bourdeaux. The throne of the arch fiend was placed in the middle of the Place de Gallienne, and the whole space was covered with the multitude of witches and wizards who flocked to it from far and near; some arriving even from distant Scotland.

After two hundred poor wretches had been hanged and burned, there seemed no diminution in the number of criminals to be tried. Many of the latter were asked upon the rack what Satan had said, when he found that the commissioners were proceeding with such severity? The general reply was, that he did not seem to care much about it. Some of them asserted, that they had boldly reproached him for suffering the execution of their friends, saying, "*Out upon thee, false fiend! thy promise was, that they should not die! Look! how thou hast kept thy word! They have been burned, and are a heap of ashes!*" Upon these occasions he was never offended. He would give orders that the sports of the Domdaniel should cease, and producing illusory fires that did not burn, he encouraged them to walk through, assuring them that the fires lighted by the executioner gave no more pain than those. They would then ask him, where their friends were, since they had not suffered; to which the "Father of Lies" invariably replied, that they were happy in a far country, and could see and hear all that was then passing; and that, if they called by name those they wished to converse with, they might hear their voices in reply. Satan then imitated the voices of the defunct witches so successfully, that they were all deceived. Having answered all objections, the orgies recommenced, and lasted till the cock crew.

De l'Ancre was also very zealous in the trial of unhappy monomaniacs for the crime of lycanthropy. Several who were arrested confessed, without being tortured, that they were *weir-wolves*, and that at night, they rushed out among the flocks and herds, killing and devouring. One young man at Besançon, with the full consciousness of the awful fate that awaited him, voluntarily gave himself up to the commissioner Espaignel, and confessed that he was the servant of a strong fiend, who was known by the name of the "Lord of the

Forests." By his power, he was transformed into the likeness of a wolf. The "Lord of the Forests," assumed the same shape, but was much larger, fiercer, and stronger. They prowled about the pastures together at midnight, strangling the watch-dogs that defended the folds, and killing more sheep than they could devour. He felt, he said, a fierce pleasure in these excursions, and howled in excess of joy as he tore with his fangs the warm flesh of the sheep asunder. This youth was not alone in this horrid confession; many others voluntarily owned that they were *weir-wolves*, and many more were forced by torture to make the same avowal. Such criminals were thought to be too atrocious to be hanged first, and then burned: they were generally sentenced to be burned alive, and their ashes to be scattered to the winds. Grave and learned doctors of divinity openly sustained the possibility of these transformations, relying mainly upon the history of Nebuchadnezzar. They could not imagine why, if he had been an ox, modern men could not become wolves, by Divine permission and the power of the devil. They also contended that, if men should confess, it was evidence enough, if there had been no other. Delrio mentions that one gentleman accused of lycanthropy was put to the torture no less than twenty times, but still he would not confess. An intoxicating draught was then given him, and under its influence he confessed that he was a *weir-wolf*. Delrio cites this to show the extreme equity of the commissioners. They never burned anybody till he confessed; and if one course of torture would not suffice, their patience was not exhausted, and they tried him again and again, even to the twentieth time! Well may we exclaim, when such atrocities have been committed in the name of religion,

"Quel lion, quel tigre égale en cruaute,
Une injuste fureur qu'arme la piété?"

The trial of the unhappy Urbain Grandier, the curate of Loudun, for bewitching a number of girls in the convent of the Ursulines in that town, was, like that of Maréchale d'Ancre, an accusation resorted to by his enemies to ruin one against whom no other charge could be brought so readily. This noted affair, which kept France in commotion for months,

and the true character of which was known even at that time, merits no more than a passing notice in this place. It did not spring from the epidemic dread of sorcery then so prevalent, but was carried on by wretched intriguers, who had sworn to have the life of their foe. Such a charge could not be refuted in 1634: the accused could not, as Bodinus expresses it, "make the malice of the prosecutors more clear than the sun;" and his own denial, however intelligible, honest, and straightforward, was held as nothing in refutation of the testimony of the crazy women who imagined themselves bewitched. The more absurd and contradictory their assertions, the stronger the argument employed by his enemies that the devil was in them. He was burned alive, under circumstances of great cruelty.*

A singular instance of the epidemic fear of witchcraft occurred at Lille, in 1639. A pious, but not very sane lady, named Antoinette Bourignon, founded a school, or *hospice*, in that city. One day, on entering the school-room, she imagined that she saw a great number of little black angels flying about the heads of the children. In great alarm, she told her pupils of what she had seen, warning them to beware of the devil, whose imps were hovering about them. The foolish woman continued daily to repeat the same story, and Satan and his power became the only subject of conversation, not only between the girls themselves, but between them and their instructors. One of them at this time ran away from the school. On being brought back and interrogated, she said she had not run away, but had been carried away by the devil—she was a witch, and had been one since the age of seven. Some other little girls in the school went into fits at this announcement, and, on their recovery, confessed that they also were witches. At last, the whole of them, to the number of fifty, worked upon each other's imaginations to such a degree that they also confessed that they were witches—that they attended the

* A very graphic account of the execution of this unfortunate gentleman is to be found in the excellent romance of M. Alfred de Vigny, entitled "Cinq Mars;" but if the reader wishes for a full and accurate detail of all the circumstances of one of the most extraordinary trials upon record, he is referred to a work published anonymously, at Amsterdam, in 1693, entitled "Histoire des Diables de Loudun, ou de la Possession des Religieuses Ursulines, et de la Condemnation et du Supplice d'Urbain Grandier."

Domdaniel, or meeting of the fiends—that they could ride through the air on broom-sticks, feast on infants' flesh, or creep through a key-hole.

The citizens of Lille were astounded at these disclosures. The clergy hastened to investigate the matter; many of them, to their credit, openly expressed their opinion that the whole affair was an imposture: not so the majority—they strenuously insisted that the confessions of the children were valid, and that it was necessary to make an example by burning them all for witches. The poor parents, alarmed for their offspring, implored the examining Capuchins with tears in their eyes to save their young lives, insisting that they were bewitched, and not bewitching. This opinion also gained ground in the town. Antoinette Bourignon, who had put these absurd notions into the heads of the children, was accused of witchcraft, and examined before the council. The circumstances of the case seemed so unfavourable towards her that she would not stay for a second examination. Disguising herself as she best could, she hastened out of Lille and escaped pursuit. If she had remained four hours longer, she would have been burned by judicial sentence, as a witch and a heretic. It is to be hoped that, wherever she went, she learned the danger of tampering with youthful minds, and was never again entrusted with the management of children.

The Duke of Brunswick and the Elector of Menz were struck with the great cruelty exercised in the torture of suspected persons, and convinced at the same time that no righteous judge would consider a confession extorted by pain, and contradictory in itself, as sufficient evidence to justify the execution of any accused person. It is related of the Duke of Brunswick that he invited two learned Jesuits to his house, who were known to entertain strong opinions upon the subject of witchcraft, with a view of showing them the cruelty and absurdity of such practices. A woman lay in the dungeon of the city accused of witchcraft, and the Duke, having given previous instructions to the officiating torturers, went with the two Jesuits to hear her confession. By a series of artful leading questions, the poor creature, in the extremity of her anguish, was induced to confess that she had often attended the sabbath of the fiends upon the Brocken—that she had seen two Jesuits there, who had made themselves notorious,

even among witches, for their abominations—that she had seen them assume the form of goats, wolves, and other animals; and that many noted witches had borne them five, six, and seven children at a birth, who had heads like toads and legs like spiders. Being asked if the Jesuits were far from her, she replied that they were in the room beside her. The Duke of Brunswick led his astounded friends away, and explained the stratagem. This was convincing proof to both of them that thousands of persons had suffered unjustly; they knew their own innocence, and shuddered to think what their fate might have been, if an enemy, instead of a friend, had put such a confession into the mouth of a criminal. One of these Jesuits was Frederick Spee, the author of the "Cautio Criminalis," published in 1631. This work, exposing the horrors of the witch trials, had a most salutary effect in Germany: Schonbrunn, Archbishop and Elector of Menz, abolished the torture entirely within his dominions, and his example was imitated by the Duke of Brunswick and other potentates. The number of supposed witches immediately diminished, and the violence of the mania began to subside. The Elector of Brandenburg issued a rescript, in 1654, with respect to the case of Anna of Ellerbrock, a supposed witch, forbidding the use of torture, and stigmatizing the swimming of witches as an unjust, cruel, and deceitful test.

This was the beginning of the dawn after the long-protracted darkness. The tribunals no longer condemned witches to execution by hundreds in a year. Würzburg, the grand theatre of the burnings, burned but one, where, forty years previously, it had burned threescore. From 1660 to 1670, the electoral chambers in all parts of Germany constantly commuted the sentence of death passed by the provincial tribunals into imprisonment for life, or burning on the cheek.

A truer philosophy had gradually disabused the public mind. Learned men freed themselves from the trammels of a debasing superstition, and governments, both civil and ecclesiastical, repressed the popular delusion they had so long encouraged. The Parliament of Normandy condemned a number of women to death, in the year 1670, on the old charge of riding on broomsticks to the Domdaniel; but Louis XIV. commuted the sentence into banishment for life. The Parliament remonstrated, and sent the King the following

remarkable request. The reader will, perhaps, be glad to see this document at length. It is of importance, as the last effort of a legislative assembly to uphold this great error; and the arguments they used, and the instances they quoted, are in the highest degree curious. It reflects honour upon the memory of Louis XIV. that he was not swayed by it.

"REQUEST OF THE PARLIAMENT OF ROUEN TO THE KING, IN 1670.

"SIRE,

"Emboldened by the authority which your Majesty has committed into our hands in the province of Normandy, to try and punish offences, and more particularly those offences of the nature of witchcraft, which tend to the destruction of religion and the ruin of nations, we, your Parliament, remonstrate humbly with your Majesty upon certain cases of this kind which have been lately brought before us. We cannot permit the letter addressed by your Majesty's command to the Attorney-General of this district, for the reprieve of certain persons condemned to death for witchcraft, and for the staying of proceedings in several other cases, to remain unnoticed, and without remarking upon the consequences which may ensue. There is also a letter from your Secretary of State, declaring your Majesty's intention to commute the punishment of these criminals into one of perpetual banishment, and to submit to the opinion of the Procureur-General, and of the most learned members of the Parliament of Paris, whether, in the matter of witchcraft, the jurisprudence of the Parliament of Rouen is to be followed in preference to that of the Parliament of Paris, and of the other parliaments of the kingdom which judge differently.

"Although by the ordinances of the Kings your predecessors, Parliaments have been forbidden to pay any attention to *lettres de cachet;* we, nevertheless, from the knowledge which we have, in common with the whole kingdom, of the care bestowed by your Majesty for the good of your subjects, and from the submission and obedience to your commandments which we have always manifested, have stayed all proceedings, in conformity to your orders; hoping that your Majesty, considering the importance of the crime of witchcraft, and the

consequences likely to ensue from its impunity, will be graciously pleased to grant us once more your permission to continue the trials, and execute judgment upon those found guilty. And as, since we received the letter of your Secretary of State, we have also been made acquainted with the determination of your Majesty, not only to commute the sentence of death passed upon these witches into one of perpetual banishment from the province, but to re-establish them in the possession of their goods and chattels, and of their good fame and character, your Parliament have thought it their duty, on occasion of these crimes, the greatest which men can commit, to make you acquainted with the general and uniform feelings of the people of this province with regard to them; it being, moreover, a question in which are concerned the glory of God and the relief of your suffering subjects, who groan under their fears from the threats and menaces of this sort of persons, and who feel the effects of them every day in the mortal and extraordinary maladies which attack them, and the surprising damage and loss of their possessions.

"Your Majesty knows well that there is no crime so opposed to the commands of God as witchcraft, which destroys the very foundation of religion, and draws strange abominations after it. It is for this reason, Sire, that the Scriptures pronounce the punishment of death against offenders, and that the church and the holy fathers have fulminated their anathemas, and that canonical decisions have one and all decreed the most severe punishments, to deter from this crime; and that the Church of France, animated by the piety of the Kings, your predecessors, has expressed so great a horror at it, that, not judging the punishment of perpetual imprisonment, the highest it has the power to inflict, sufficiently severe, it has left such criminals to be dealt with by the secular power.

"It has been the general feeling of all nations that such criminals ought to be condemned to death, and all the ancients were of the same opinion. The law of the 'Twelve Tables,' which was the principal of the Roman laws, ordains the same punishment. All jurisconsults agreed in it, as well as the constitutions of the Emperors, and more especially those of Constantine and Theodosius, who, enlightened by the Gospel, not only renewed the same punishment, but also deprived, expressly, all persons found guilty of witchcraft of the right

of appeal, and declared them to be unworthy of a prince's mercy. And Charles VIII., Sire, inspired by the same sentiments, passed that beautiful and severe ordinance (*cette belle et sévère ordonnance*), which enjoined the judges to punish witches according to the exigencies of the case, under a penalty of being themselves fined or imprisoned, or dismissed from their office; and decreed, at the same time, that all persons who refused to denounce a witch, should be punished as accomplices; and that all, on the contrary, who gave evidence against one, should be rewarded.

"From these considerations, Sire, and in the execution of so holy an ordinance, your parliaments, by their decrees, proportion their punishments to the guilt of the offenders: and your Parliament of Normandy has never, until the present time, found that its practice was different from that of other courts; for all the books which treat upon this matter cite an infinite number of decrees condemning witches to be burnt, or broken on the wheel, or to other punishments. The following are examples:—In the time of Chilperic, as may be seen in Gregory of Tours, b. vi. c. 35 of his History of France: all the decrees of the Parliament of Paris passed according to, and in conformity with, this ancient jurisprudence of the kingdom, cited by Imbert, in his 'Judicial Practice;' all those cited by Monstrelet, in 1459, against the witches of Artois; the decrees of the same Parliament, of the 13th of October 1573, against Mary Le Fief, native of Saumur; of the 21st of October 1596, against the Sieur de Beaumont, who pleaded, in his defence, that he had only sought the aid of the devil for the purpose of unbewitching the afflicted and of curing diseases; of the 4th of July 1606, against Francis du Bose; of the 20th of July 1582, against Abel de la Rue, native of Coulommiers; of the 2d of October 1593, against Rousseau and his daughter; of 1608, against another Rousseau and one Peley, for witchcraft and adoration of the devil at the Sabbath, under the figure of a he-goat, as confessed by them; the decree of 4th of February 1615, against Leclerc, who appealed from the sentence of the Parliament of Orleans, and who was condemned for having attended the Sabbath, and confessed, as well as two of his accomplices, who died in prison, that he had adored the devil, renounced his baptism and his faith in God, danced the witches' dance,

and offered up unholy sacrifices; the decrees of the 6th of May 1616, against a man named Leger, on a similar accusation; the pardon granted by Charles IX. to Trois Echelles, upon condition of revealing his accomplices, but afterwards revoked for renewed sorcery on his part; the decree of the Parliament of Paris, cited by Mornac in 1595; the judgments passed in consequence of the commission given by Henry IV. to the Sieur de Lancre, councillor of the Parliament of Bourdeaux; of the 20th of March 1619, against Etienne Audibert; those passed by the Chamber of Nerac, on the 26th of June 1620, against several witches; those passed by the Parliament of Toulouse in 1577, as cited by Gregory Tolosanus, against four hundred persons accused of this crime, and who were all marked with the sign of the devil. Besides all these, we might recall to your Majesty's recollection the various decrees of the Parliament of Provence, especially in the case of Gaufrédy in 1611; the decrees of the Parliament of Dijon, and those of the Parliament of Rennes, following the example of the condemnation of the Marshal de Rays, who was burned in 1441, for the crime of witchcraft, in presence of the Duke of Brittany;—all these examples, Sire, prove that the accusation of witchcraft has always been punished with death by the Parliaments of your kingdom, and justify the uniformity of their practice.

"These, Sire, are the motives upon which your Parliament of Normandy has acted in decreeing the punishment of death against the persons lately brought before it for this crime. If it has happened that, on any occasion, these Parliaments, and the Parliament of Normandy among the rest, have condemned the guilty to a less punishment than that of death, it was for the reason that their guilt was not of the deepest dye; your Majesty, and the Kings your predecessors, having left full liberty to the various tribunals to whom they delegated the administration of justice, to decree such punishment as was warranted by the evidence brought before them.

"After so many authorities, and punishments ordained by human and divine laws, we humbly supplicate your Majesty to reflect once more upon the extraordinary results which proceed from the malevolence of this sort of people—on the deaths from unknown diseases, which are often the consequences of their menaces—on the loss of the goods and chattels of your

subjects—on the proofs of guilt continually afforded by the insensibility of the marks upon the accused—on the sudden transportation of bodies from one place to another—on the sacrifices and nocturnal assemblies, and other facts, corroborated by the testimony of ancient and modern authors, and verified by so many eye-witnesses, composed partly of accomplices, and partly of people who had no interest in the trials beyond the love of truth, and confirmed, moreover, by the confessions of the accused parties themselves; and that, Sire, with so much agreement and conformity between the different cases, that the most ignorant persons convicted of this crime have spoken to the same circumstances, and in nearly the same words, as the most celebrated authors who have written about it, all of which may be easily proved to your Majesty's satisfaction by the records of various trials before your parliaments.

"These, Sire, are truths so intimately bound up with the principles of our religion, that, extraordinary although they be, no person has been able to this time to call them in question. If some have cited, in opposition to these truths, the pretended canon of the Council of Ancyre, and a passage from St. Augustin, in a treatise upon the 'Spirit and the Soul,' it has been without foundation; and it would be easy to convince your Majesty that neither the one nor the other ought to be accounted of any authority; and, besides that the canon, in this sense, would be contrary to the opinion of all succeeding councils of the church, Cardinal Baronius, and all learned commentators, agree that it is not to be found in any old edition. In effect, in those editions wherein it is found, it is in another language, and is in direct contradiction to the twenty-third canon of the same council, which condemns sorcery, according to all preceding constitutions. Even supposing that this canon was really promulgated by the Council of Ancyre, we must observe that it was issued in the second century, when the principal attention of the Church was directed to the destruction of paganism. For this reason, it condemns that class of women who said they could pass through the air, and over immense regions, with Diana and Herodias, and enjoins all preachers to teach the falsehood of such an opinion, in order to deter people from the worship of these false divinities; but it does not question the power of the devil over the human body, which is, in fact, proved by the Holy Gospel of Jesus

Christ himself. And with regard, Sire, to the pretended passage of St. Augustin, everybody knows that it was not written by him, because the writer, whoever he was, cites Bœtius, who died more than eighty years after the time of St. Augustin. Besides, there is still more convincing proof in the fact, that the same father establishes the truth of witchcraft in all his writings, and more particularly in his 'City of God;' and in his first volume, question the 25th, wherein he states that sorcery is a communion between man and the devil, which all good Christians ought to look upon with horror.

"Taking all these things into consideration, Sire, the officers of your Parliament hope, from the justice of your Majesty, that you will be graciously pleased to receive the humble remonstrances they have taken the liberty to make. They are compelled, for the acquittal of their own consciences and in discharge of their duty, to make known to your Majesty, that the decrees they passed against the sorcerers and witches brought before them, were passed after a mature deliberation on the part of all the judges present, and that nothing has been done therein which is not conformable to the universal jurisprudence of the kingdom, and for the general welfare of your Majesty's subjects, of whom there is not one who can say that he is secure from the malevolence of such criminals. We therefore supplicate your Majesty to suffer us to carry into effect the sentences we passed, and to proceed with the trial of the other persons accused of the same crime; and that the piety of your Majesty will not suffer to be introduced during your reign an opinion contrary to the principles of that holy religion for which you have always employed so gloriously both your cares and your arms."

Louis, as we have already mentioned, paid no attention to this appeal. The lives of the old women were spared, and prosecutions for mere witchcraft, unconnected with other offences, were discontinued throughout France. In 1680 an act was passed for the punishment, not of witches, but of pretenders to witchcraft, fortune-tellers, divineresses, and poisoners.

Thus the light broke in upon Germany, France, England, and Scotland about the same time, gradually growing clearer and clearer till the middle of the eighteenth century, when

witchcraft was finally reckoned amongst exploded doctrines, and the belief in it confined to the uttermost vulgar. Twice, however, did the madness burst forth again as furious, while it lasted, as ever it had been. The first time in Sweden, in 1669, and the second in Germany, so late as 1749. Both these instances merit particular mention. The first is one of the most extraordinary upon record, and for atrocity and absurdity is unsurpassed in the annals of any nation.

It having been reported to the King of Sweden that the little village of Mohra, in the province of Dalecarlia, was troubled exceedingly with witches, he appointed a commission of clergy and laymen to trace the rumour to its source, with full powers to punish the guilty. On the 12th of August 1669, the commissioners arrived in the bewitched village, to the great joy of the credulous inhabitants. On the following day the whole population, amounting to three thousand persons, assembled in the church. A sermon was preached, "declaring the miserable case of those people that suffered themselves to be deluded by the devil," and fervent prayer was offered up that God would remove the scourge from among them.

The whole assembly then adjourned to the rector's house, filling all the street before it, when the King's commission was read, charging every person who knew anything of the witchery, to come forward and declare the truth. A passion of tears seized upon the multitude; men, women, and children began to weep and sob, and all promised to divulge what they had heard or knew. In this frame of mind they were dismissed to their homes. On the following day they were again called together, when the depositions of several persons were taken publicly before them all. The result was that seventy persons, including fifteen children, were taken into custody. Numbers also were arrested in the neighbouring district of Elfdale. Being put to the torture, they all confessed their guilt. They said they used to go to a gravel-pit that lay hard by the cross-way, where they put a vest upon their heads, and danced "round and round and round about." They then went to the cross-way, and called three times upon the devil; the first time in a low still voice; the second, somewhat louder; and the third, very loudly, with these words, "Antecessor, come, and carry us to Blockula!" This invo-

cation never failed to bring him to their view. He generally appeared as a little old man, in a gray coat, with red and blue stockings, with exceedingly long garters. He had besides a very high-crowned hat, with bands of many-coloured linen enfolded about it, and a long red beard, that hung down to his middle.

The first question he put to them was, whether they would serve him soul and body? On their answering in the affirmative, he told them to make ready for the journey to Blockula. It was necessary to procure, in the first place, "some scrapings of altars and filings of church clocks." Antecessor then gave them a horn, with some salve in it, wherewith they anointed themselves. These preparations ended, he brought beasts for them to ride upon, horses, asses, goats, and monkeys; and, giving them a saddle, a hammer, and a nail, uttered the word of command, and away they went. Nothing stopped them. They flew over churches, high walls, rocks, and mountains, until they came to the green meadow where Blockula was situated. Upon these occasions they carried as many children with them as they could; for the devil, they said, "did plague and whip them if they did not procure him children, insomuch that they had no peace or quiet for him."

Many parents corroborated a part of this evidence, stating that their children had repeatedly told them that they had been carried away in the night to Blockula, where the devil had beaten them black and blue. They had seen the marks in the morning, but they soon disappeared. One little girl was examined, who swore positively that she was carried through the air by the witches, and when at a great height she uttered the holy name of Jesus, she immediately fell to the ground, and made a great hole in her side. "The devil, however, picked her up, healed her side, and carried her away to Blockula." She added, and her mother confirmed the statement, that she had till that day "an exceeding great pain in her side." This was a clencher, and the nail of conviction was driven home to the hearts of the judges.

The place called Blockula, whither they were carried, was a large house, with a gate to it, "in a delicate meadow, whereof they could see no end." There was a very long table in it, at which the witches sat down; and in other rooms

"there were very lovely and delicate beds for them to sleep upon."

After a number of ceremonies had been performed, by which they bound themselves, body and soul, to the service of Antecessor, they sat down to a feast, composed of broth, made of colworts and bacon, oatmeal, bread and butter, milk and cheese. The devil always took the chair, and sometimes played to them on the harp or the fiddle, while they were eating. After dinner they danced in a ring, sometimes naked, and sometimes in their clothes, cursing and swearing all the time. Some of the women added particulars too horrible and too obscene for repetition.

Once the devil pretended to be dead, that he might see whether his people regretted him. They instantly set up a loud wail, and wept three tears each for him, at which he was so pleased, that he jumped up among them, and hugged in his arms those who had been most obstreperous in their sorrow.

Such were the principal details given by the children, and corroborated by the confessions of the full-grown witches. Anything more absurd was never before stated in a court of justice. Many of the accused contradicted themselves most palpably; but the commissioners gave no heed to discrepancies. One of them, the parson of the district, stated, in the course of the inquiry, that on a particular night, which he mentioned, he had been afflicted with a headache so agonizing, that he could not account for it otherwise than by supposing he was bewitched. In fact, he thought a score of witches must have been dancing on the crown of his head. This announcement excited great horror among the pious dames of the auditory, who loudly expressed their wonder that the devil should have power to hurt so good a man. One poor witch, who lay in the very jaws of death, confessed that she knew too well the cause of the minister's headache. The devil had sent her with a sledge hammer and a large nail, to drive into the good man's skull. She had hammered at it for some time, but the skull was so enormously *thick*, that she made no impression upon it. Every hand was held up in astonishment. The pious minister blessed God that his skull was so solid, and he became renowned for his thick head all the days of his life. Whether the witch intended a joke does not appear, but

she was looked upon as a criminal more than usually atrocious. Seventy persons were condemned to death on these so awful yet so ridiculous confessions. Twenty-three of them were burned together, in one fire, in the village of Mohra, in the presence of thousands of delighted spectators. On the following day fifteen children were murdered in the same manner; offered up in sacrifice to the bloody Moloch of superstition. The remaining thirty-two were executed at the neighbouring town of Fahluna. Besides these, fifty-six children were found guilty of witchcraft in a minor degree, and sentenced to various punishments, such as running the gauntlet, imprisonment, and public whipping once a week for a twelvemonth.

Long after the occurrence of this case, it was cited as one of the most convincing proofs upon record of the prevalence of witchcraft. When men wish to construct or support a theory, how they torture facts into their service! The lying whimsies of a few sick children, encouraged by foolish parents, and drawn out by superstitious neighbours, were sufficient to set a country in a flame. If, instead of commissioners as deeply sunk in the slough of ignorance as the people they were sent amongst, there had been deputed a few men firm in courage and clear in understanding, how different would have been the result! Some of the poor children who were burned would have been sent to an infirmary; others would have been well flogged; the credulity of the parents would have been laughed at, and the lives of seventy persons spared. The belief in witchcraft remains in Sweden to this day; but, happily, the annals of that country present no more such instances of lamentable aberration of intellect as the one just cited.

In New England, about the same time, the colonists were scared by similar stories of the antics of the devil. All at once a fear seized upon the multitude, and supposed criminals were arrested day after day in such numbers, that the prisons were found too small to contain them. A girl, named Goodwin, the daughter of a mason, who was hypochondriac and subject to fits, imagined that an old Irishwoman, named Glover, had bewitched her. Her two brothers, in whose constitutions there was apparently a predisposition to similar fits, went off in the same way, crying out that the devil and Dame Glover were tormenting them. At times their joints were so

stiff that they could not be moved, while at others, said the neighbours, they were so flexible, that the bones appeared softened into sinews. The supposed witch was seized, and, as she could not repeat the Lord's Prayer without making a mistake in it, she was condemned and executed.

But the popular excitement was not allayed. One victim was not enough: the people waited agape for new disclosures. Suddenly two hysteric girls in another family fell into fits daily, and the cry of witchcraft resounded from one end of the colony to the other. The feeling of suffocation in the throat, so common in cases of hysteria, was said by the patients to be caused by the devil himself, who had stuck balls in the windpipe to choke them. They felt the pricking of thorns in every part of the body, and one of them vomited needles. The case of these girls, who were the daughter and niece of a Mr. Parvis, the minister of a Calvinist chapel, excited so much attention, that all the weak women in the colony began to fancy themselves similarly afflicted. The more they brooded on it, the more convinced they became. The contagion of this mental disease was as great as if it had been a pestilence. One after the other the women fainted away, asserting, on their recovery, that they had seen the spectres of witches. Where there were three or four girls in a family, they so worked, each upon the diseased imagination of the other, that they fell into fits five or six times in a day. Some related that the devil himself appeared to them, bearing in his hand a parchment roll, and promising that if they would sign an agreement transferring to him their immortal souls, they should be immediately relieved from fits and all the ills of the flesh. Others asserted that they saw witches only, who made them similar promises, threatening that they should never be free from aches and pains till they had agreed to become the devil's. When they refused, the witches pinched, or bit, or pricked them with long pins or needles. More than two hundred persons named by these mischievous visionaries, were thrown into prison. They were of all ages and conditions of life, and many of them of exemplary character. No less than nineteen were condemned and executed before reason returned to the minds of the colonists. The most horrible part of this lamentable history is, that among the victims there was a little child only five years old. Some women

swore that they had seen it repeatedly in company with the devil, and that it had bitten them often with its little teeth, for refusing to sign a compact with the Evil One. It can hardly increase our feelings of disgust and abhorrence when we learn that this insane community actually tried and executed a dog for the same offence!

One man, named Cory, stoutly refused to plead to the preposterous indictment against him. As was the practice in such cases, he was pressed to death. It is told of the Sheriff of New England, who superintended the execution, that when this unhappy man thrust out his tongue in his mortal agony, he seized hold of a cane, and crammed it back again into the mouth. If ever there were a fiend in human form, it was this Sheriff; a man, who, if the truth were known, perhaps plumed himself upon his piety—thought he was doing God good service, and

"Hoped to merit heaven by making earth a hell!"

Arguing still in the firm belief of witchcraft, the bereaved people began to inquire, when they saw their dearest friends snatched away from them by these wide-spreading accusations, whether the whole proceedings were not carried on by the agency of the devil. Might not the great enemy have put false testimony into the mouths of the witnesses, or might not the witnesses be witches themselves? Every man who was in danger of losing his wife, his child, or his sister, embraced this doctrine with avidity. The revulsion was as sudden as the first frenzy. All at once, the colonists were convinced of their error. The judges put a stop to the prosecutions, even of those who had confessed their guilt. The latter were no sooner at liberty than they retracted all they had said, and the greater number hardly remembered the avowals which agony had extorted from them. Eight persons, who had been tried and condemned, were set free; and gradually girls ceased to have fits and to talk of the persecutions of the devil. The judge who had condemned the first criminal executed on this charge, was so smitten with sorrow and humiliation at his folly, that he set apart the anniversary of that day as one of solemn penitence and fasting. He still clung to the belief in witchcraft; no new light had broken in

upon him on that subject, but, happily for the community, the delusion had taken a merciful turn. The whole colony shared the feeling; the jurors on the different trials openly expressed their penitence in the churches; and those who had suffered were regarded as the victims, and not the accomplices of Satan.

It is related that the Indian tribes in New England were sorely puzzled at the infatuation of the settlers, and thought them either a race inferior to, or more sinful than the French colonists in the vicinity, amongst whom, as they remarked, "the Great Spirit sent no witches."

Returning again to the continent of Europe, we find that, after the year 1680, men became still wiser upon this subject. For twenty years the populace were left to their belief, but governments in general gave it no aliment in the shape of executions. The edict of Louis XIV. gave a blow to the superstition, from which it never recovered. The last execution in the Protestant cantons of Switzerland was at Geneva, in 1652. The various potentates of Germany, although they could not stay the trials, invariably commuted the sentence into imprisonment, in all cases where the pretended witch was accused of pure witchcraft, unconnected with any other crime. In the year 1701, Thomasius, the learned professor at the University of Halle, delivered his inaugural thesis, "De Crimine Magiæ," which struck another blow at the falling monster of popular error. But a faith so strong as that in witchcraft was not to be eradicated at once: the arguments of learned men did not penetrate to the villages and hamlets, but still they achieved great things; they rendered the belief an unworking faith, and prevented the supply of victims, on which for so many ages it had battened and grown strong.

Once more the delusion broke out; like a wild beast wounded to the death, it collected all its remaining energies for the final convulsion, which was to show how mighty it had once been. Germany, which had nursed the frightful error in its cradle, tended it on its death-bed, and Würzburg, the scene of so many murders on the same pretext, was destined to be the scene of the last. That it might lose no portion of its bad renown, the last murder was as atrocious as the first. This case offers a great resemblance to that of the witches of Mohra and New England, except in the number of its victims.

It happened so late as the year 1749, to the astonishment and disgust of the rest of Europe.

A number of young women in a convent at Würzburg fancied themselves bewitched; they felt like all hysteric subjects, a sense of suffocation in the throat. They went into fits repeatedly; and one of them who had swallowed needles, evacuated them at abscesses, which formed in different parts of the body. The cry of sorcery was raised, and a young woman, named Maria Renata Sänger, was arrested on the charge of having leagued with the devil, to bewitch five of the young ladies. It was sworn on the trial that Maria had been frequently seen to clamber over the convent walls in the shape of a pig—that, proceeding to the cellar, she used to drink the best wine till she was intoxicated; and then start suddenly up in her own form. Other girls asserted that she used to prowl about the roof like a cat, and often penetrate into their chamber, and frighten them by her dreadful howlings. It was also said that she had been seen in the shape of a hare, milking the cows dry in the meadows belonging to the convent; that she used to perform as an actress on the boards of Drury Lane Theatre in London, and, on the very same night, return upon a broomstick to Würzburg, and afflict the young ladies with pains in all their limbs. Upon this evidence she was condemned, and burned alive in the market-place of Würzburg.

Here ends this frightful catalogue of murder and superstition. Since that day, the belief in witchcraft has fled from the populous abodes of men, and taken refuge in remote villages and districts too wild, rugged, and inhospitable to afford a resting-place for the foot of civilization. Rude fishers and uneducated labourers still attribute every phenomenon of nature, which they account for, to the devil and witches. Catalepsy, that wondrous disease, is still thought by ignorant gossips to be the work of Satan; and hypochondriacs, uninformed by science of the nature of their malady, devoutly believe in the reality of their visions. The reader would hardly credit the extent of the delusion upon this subject in the very heart of England at this day. Many an old woman leads a life of misery from the unfeeling insults of her neighbours, who raise the scornful finger and hooting voice at her, because in her decrepitude she is ugly, spiteful, perhaps insane, and realizes in her personal appearance the description preserved by tra-

dition of the witches of yore. Even in the neighbourhood of great towns the taint remains of this once widely-spread contagion. If no victims fall beneath it, the enlightenment of the law is all that prevents a recurrence of scenes as horrid as those of the seventeenth century. Hundreds upon hundreds of witnesses could be found to swear to absurdities as great as those asserted by infamous Matthew Hopkins.

In the Annual Register for 1760, an instance of the belief in witchcraft is related, which shows how superstition lingers. A dispute arose in the little village of Glen, in Leicestershire, between two old women, each of whom vehemently accused the other of witchcraft. The quarrel at last ran so high that a challenge ensued, and they both agreed to be tried by the ordeal of swimming. They accordingly stripped to their shifts —procured some men, who tied their thumbs and great toes together crosswise, and then, with a cart-rope about their middle, suffered themselves to be thrown into a pool of water. One of them sank immediately, but the other continued struggling a short time upon the surface of the water, which the mob deeming an infallible sign of her guilt, pulled her out, and insisted that she should immediately impeach all her accomplices in the craft. She accordingly told them that, in the neighbouring village of Burton, there were several old women as "much witches as she was." Happily for her, this negative information was deemed sufficient, and a student in astrology, or "white-witch," coming up at the time, the mob, by his direction, proceeded forthwith to Burton in search of all the delinquents. After a little consultation on their arrival, they went to the old woman's house on whom they had fixed the strongest suspicion. The poor old creature on their approach locked the outer door, and from the window of an upstairs room asked what they wanted. They informed her that she was charged of being guilty of witchcraft, and that they were come to duck her; remonstrating with her at the same time upon the necessity of submission to the ordeal, that, if she were innocent, all the world might know it. Upon her persisting in a positive refusal to come down, they broke open the door and carried her out by force, to a deep gravel-pit full of water. They tied her thumbs and toes together and threw her into the water, where they kept her for several minutes, drawing her out and in two or three times by the rope round

her middle. Not being able to satisfy themselves whether she were a witch or no, they at last let her go, or more properly speaking, they left her on the bank to walk home by herself, if she ever recovered. Next day, they tried the same experiment upon another woman, and afterwards upon a third; but, fortunately, neither of the victims lost their life from this brutality. Many of the ringleaders in the outrage were apprehended during the week, and tried before the justices at quarter-sessions. Two of them were sentenced to stand in the pillory and to be imprisoned for a month; and as many as twenty more were fined in small sums for the assault, and bound over to keep the peace for a twelvemonth.

"So late as the year 1785," says Arnot, in his collection and abridgment of Criminal Trials in Scotland, "it was the custom among the sect of Seceders to read from the pulpit an annual confession of sins, national and personal; amongst the former of which was particularly mentioned the 'Repeal by Parliament of the penal statute against witches, contrary to the express laws of God.'"

Many houses are still to be found in England with the horse-shoe (the grand preservative against witchcraft) nailed against the threshold. If any over-wise philosopher should attempt to remove them, the chances are that he would have more broken bones than thanks for his interference. Let any man walk into Cross Street, Hatton Garden, and from thence into Bleeding-heart Yard, and learn the tales still told and believed of one house in that neighbourhood, and he will ask himself in astonishment if such things can be in the nineteenth century. The witchcraft of Lady Hatton, the wife of the famous Sir Christopher, so renowned for his elegant dancing in the days of Elizabeth, is as devoutly believed as the Gospels. The room is to be seen where the devil seized her after the expiration of the contract he had made with her, and bore her away bodily to the pit of Tophet; the pump against which he dashed her is still pointed out, and the spot where her heart was found, after he had torn it out of her bosom with his iron claws, has received the name of Bleeding-heart Yard, in confirmation of the story. Whether the horse shoe still remains upon the door of the haunted house, to keep away other witches, is uncertain; but there it was, twelve or thirteen years ago. The

writer resided at that time in the house alluded to, and well remembers that more than one old woman begged for admittance repeatedly, to satisfy themselves that it was in its proper place. One poor creature, apparently insane, and clothed in rags, came to the door with a tremendous double-knock, as loud as that of a fashionable footman, and walked straight along the passage to the horseshoe. Great was the wonderment of the inmates, especially when the woman spat upon the horseshoe, and expressed her sorrow that she could do no harm while it remained there. After spitting upon, and kicking it again and again, she coolly turned round and left the house, without saying a word to anybody. This poor creature perhaps intended a joke, but the probability is that she imagined herself a witch. In Saffron Hill, where she resided, her ignorant neighbours gave her that character, and looked upon her with no little fear and aversion.

More than one example of the popular belief in witchcraft occurred in the neighbourhood of Hastings so lately as the year 1830. An aged woman, who resided in the Rope-walk of that town, was so repulsive in her appearance, that she was invariably accused of being a witch by all the ignorant people who knew her. She was bent completely double; and though very old, her eye was unusually bright and malignant. She wore a red cloak, and supported herself on a crutch: she was, to all outward appearance, the very *beau ideal* of a witch. So dear is power to the human heart, that this old woman actually encouraged the popular superstition: she took no pains to remove the ill impression, but seemed to delight that she, old and miserable as she was, could keep in awe so many happier and stronger fellow-creatures. Timid girls crouched with fear when they met her, and many would go a mile out of their way to avoid her. Like the witches of the olden time, she was not sparing of her curses against those who offended her. The child of a woman who resided within two doors of her, was afflicted with lameness, and the mother constantly asserted that the old woman had bewitched her. All the neighbours credited the tale. It was believed, too, that she could assume the form of a cat. Many a harmless puss has been hunted almost to the death by mobs of men and boys, upon the supposition that the animal would start up before them in the true shape of Mother * * * * *.

In the same town there resided a fisherman,—who is, probably, still alive, and whose name, for that reason, we forbear to mention,—who was the object of unceasing persecution, because it was said that he had sold himself to the devil. It was currently reported that he could creep through a keyhole, and that he had made a witch of his daughter, in order that he might have the more power over his fellows. It was also believed that he could sit on the points of pins and needles, and feel no pain. His brother fishermen put him to this test whenever they had an opportunity. In the alehouses which he frequented, they often placed long needles in the cushions of the chairs, in such a manner that he could not fail to pierce himself when he sat down. The result of these experiments tended to confirm their faith in his supernatural powers. It was asserted that he never flinched. Such was the popular feeling in the fashionable town of Hastings only seven years ago; very probably it is the same now.

In the north of England, the superstition lingers to an almost inconceivable extent. Lancashire abounds with witch-doctors, a set of quacks, who pretend to cure diseases inflicted by the devil. The practices of these worthies may be judged of by the following case, reported in the "Hertford Reformer," of the 23d of June, 1838. The witch-doctor alluded to is better known by the name of the *cunning man*, and has a large practice in the counties of Lincoln and Nottingham. According to the writer in "The Reformer," the dupe, whose name is not mentioned, had been for about two years afflicted with a painful abscess, and had been prescribed for without relief by more than one medical gentleman. He was urged by some of his friends, not only in his own village, but in neighbouring ones, to consult the witch-doctor, as they were convinced he was under some evil influence. He agreed, and sent his wife to the *cunning man*, who lived in New Saint Swithin's, in Lincoln. She was informed by this ignorant impostor that her husband's disorder was an infliction of the devil, occasioned by his next-door neighbours, who had made use of certain charms for that purpose. From the description he gave of the process, it appears to be the same as that employed by Dr. Fian and Gellie Duncan, to work wo upon King James. He stated that the neighbours, instigated by a witch, whom he pointed out, took some wax, and moulded

it before the fire into the form of her husband, as near as they could represent him; they then pierced the image with pins on all sides—repeated the Lord's Prayer backwards, and offered prayers to the devil that he would fix his stings into the person whom that figure represented, in like manner as they pierced *it* with pins. To counteract the effects of this diabolical process, the witch-doctor prescribed a certain medicine, and a charm to be worn next the body, on that part where the disease principally lay. The patient was to repeat the 109th and 119th Psalms every day, or the cure would not be effectual. The fee which he claimed for this advice was a guinea.

So efficacious is faith in the cure of any malady, that the patient actually felt much better after a three weeks' course of this prescription. The notable charm which the quack had given was afterwards opened, and found to be a piece of parchment, covered with some cabalistic characters and signs of the planets.

The next-door neighbours were in great alarm that the witch-doctor would, on the solicitation of the recovering patient, employ some means to punish them for their pretended witchcraft. To escape the infliction, they feed another cunning man, in Nottinghamshire, who told them of a similar charm, which would preserve them from all the malice of their enemies. The writer concludes by saying, that "the doctor, not long after he had been thus consulted, wrote to say that he had discovered that his patient was not afflicted by Satan, as he had imagined, but by God, and would continue, more or less in the same state till his life's end."

An impostor carried on a similar trade in the neighbourhood of Tunbridge Wells, about the year 1830. He had been in practice for several years, and charged enormous fees for his advice. This fellow pretended to be the seventh son of a seventh son, and to be endowed in consequence with miraculous powers for the cure of all diseases, but especially of those resulting from witchcraft. It was not only the poor who employed him, but ladies who rode in their carriages. He was often sent for from a distance of sixty or seventy miles by these people, who paid all his expenses to and fro, besides rewarding him handsomely. He was about eighty years of age, and his extremely venerable appearance aided

his imposition in no slight degree. His name was Okey, or Oakley.

In France, the superstition at this day is even more prevalent than it is in England. Garinet, in his History of Magic and Sorcery in that country, cites upwards of twenty instances which occurred between the years 1805 and 1818. In the latter year, no less than three tribunals were occupied with trials originating in this humiliating belief: we shall cite only one of them. Julian Desbourdes, aged fifty-three, a mason, and inhabitant of the village of Thilouze, near Bourdeaux, was taken suddenly ill, in the month of January 1818. As he did not know how to account for his malady, he suspected at last that he was bewitched. He communicated this suspicion to his son-in-law, Bridier, and they both went to consult a sort of idiot, named Baudouin, who passed for a conjuror, or *white witch*. This man told them that Desbourdes was certainly bewitched, and offered to accompany them to the house of an old man, named Renard, who he said, was undoubtedly the criminal. On the night of the 23d of January all three proceeded stealthily to the dwelling of Renard, and accused him of afflicting persons with diseases, by the aid of the devil. Desbourdes fell on his knees, and earnestly entreated to be restored to his former health, promising that he would take no measures against him for the evil he had done. The old man denied in the strongest terms that he was a wizard; and when Desbourdes still pressed him to remove the spell from him, he said he knew nothing about the spell, and refused to remove it. The idiot Baudouin, the *white witch*, now interfered, and told his companions that no relief for the malady could ever be procured until the old man confessed his guilt. To force him to confession they lighted some sticks of sulphur, which they had brought with them for the purpose, and placed them under the old man's nose. In a few moments, he fell down suffocated and apparently lifeless. They were all greatly alarmed; and thinking that they had killed the man, they carried him out and threw him into a neighbouring pond, hoping to make it appear that he had fallen in accidentally. The pond, however, was not very deep, and the coolness of the water reviving the old man, he opened his eyes and sat up. Desbourdes and Bridier, who were still waiting on the bank, were now

more alarmed than before, lest he should recover and inform against them. They, therefore, waded into the pond—seized their victim by the hair of the head—beat him severely, and then held him under water till he was drowned.

They were all three apprehended on the charge of murder a few days afterwards. Desbourdes and Bridier were found guilty of aggravated manslaughter only, and sentenced to be burnt on the back, and to work in the galleys for life. The *white witch* Baudouin was acquitted, on the ground of insanity.

M. Garinet further informs us that France, at the time he wrote (1818), was overrun by a race of fellows, who made a trade of casting out devils and finding out witches. He adds, also, that many of the priests in the rural districts encouraged the superstition of their parishioners, by resorting frequently to exorcisms, whenever any foolish persons took it into their heads that a spell had been thrown over them. He recommended, as a remedy for the evil, that all these exorcists, whether lay or clerical, should be sent to the galleys, and that the number of witches would then very sensibly diminish.

Many other instances of this lingering belief might be cited both in France and Great Britain, and indeed in every other country in Europe. So deeply rooted are some errors that ages cannot remove them. The poisonous tree that once overshadowed the land, may be cut down by the sturdy efforts of sages and philosophers—the sun may shine clearly upon spots where venomous things once nestled in security and shade; but still the entangled roots are stretched beneath the surface, and may be found by those who dig. Another king, like James I., might make them vegetate again; and, more mischievous still, another pope, like Innocent VIII., might raise the decaying roots to strength and verdure. Still, it is consoling to think, that the delirium has passed away; that the raging madness has given place to a milder folly; and that we may now count by units the votaries of a superstition which, in former ages, numbered its victims by tens of thousands, and its votaries by millions.

THE SLOW POISONERS.

Pescara. — The like was never read of.
Stephano.—In my judgment,
To all that shall but hear it, 't will appear
A most impossible fable.
Pescara. — Troth, I'll tell you,
And briefly as I can, by what degrees
They fell into this madness.
Duke of Milan.

The atrocious system of poisoning, by poisons so slow in their operation, as to make the victim appear, to ordinary observers, as if dying from a gradual decay of nature, has been practised in all ages. Those who are curious in the matter may refer to Beckmann on Secret Poisons, in his "History of Inventions," in which he has collected several instances of it from the Greek and Roman writers. Early in the sixteenth century the crime seems to have gradually increased, till, in the seventeenth, it spread over Europe like a pestilence. It was often exercised by pretended witches and sorcerers, and finally became a branch of education amongst all who laid any claim to magical and supernatural arts. In the twenty-first year of Henry VIII. an act was passed, rendering it high treason: those found guilty of it, were to be boiled to death.

One of the first in point of date, and hardly second to any in point of atrocity, is the murder by this means of Sir Thomas Overbury, which disgraced the court of James I., in the year 1613. A slight sketch of it will be a fitting introduction to the history of the poisoning mania, which was so prevalent in France and Italy fifty years later.

Robert Kerr, a Scottish youth, was early taken notice of by James I., and loaded with honours, for no other reason that the world could ever discover than the beauty of his per-

son. James, even in his own day, was suspected of being addicted to the most abominable of all offences, and the more we examine his history now, the stronger the suspicion becomes. However that may be, the handsome Kerr, lending his smooth cheek, even in public, to the disgusting kisses of his royal master, rose rapidly in favour. In the year 1613, he was made Lord High Treasurer of Scotland, and created an English peer, by the style and title of Viscount Rochester. Still further honours were in store for him.

In this rapid promotion he had not been without a friend. Sir Thomas Overbury, the King's secretary—who appears, from some threats in his own letters, to have been no better than a pander to the vices of the King, and privy to his dangerous secrets—exerted all his backstair influence to forward the promotion of Kerr, by whom he was doubtless repaid in some way or other. Overbury did not confine his friendship to this, if friendship ever could exist between two such men, but acted the part of an *entremetteur*, and assisted Rochester to carry on an adulterous intrigue with the Lady Frances Howard, the wife of the Earl of Essex. This woman was a person of violent passions, and lost to all sense of shame. Her husband was in her way, and to be freed from him, she instituted proceedings for a divorce, on grounds which a woman of any modesty or delicacy of feeling would die rather than avow. Her scandalous suit was successful, and was no sooner decided than preparations, on a scale of the greatest magnificence, were made for her marriage with Lord Rochester.

Sir Thomas Overbury, who had willingly assisted his patron to intrigue with the Countess of Essex, seems to have imagined that his marriage with so vile a woman might retard his advancement; he accordingly employed all his influence to dissuade him from it. But Rochester was bent on the match, and his passions were as violent as those of the Countess. On one occasion, when Overbury and the Viscount were walking in the gallery of Whitehall, Overbury was overheard to say, "Well, my Lord, if you do marry that base woman, you will utterly ruin your honour and yourself. You shall never do it with my advice or consent; and, if you do, you had best look to stand fast." Rochester flung from him in rage, exclaiming with an oath, "I will be even with you for this." These words were the death-warrant of the unfortunate Over-

bury. He had mortally wounded the pride of Rochester in insinuating that by his (Overbury's) means he might be lowered in the King's favour; and he had endeavoured to curb the burning passions of a heartless, dissolute, and reckless man.

Overbury's imprudent remonstrances were reported to the Countess; and from that moment, she also vowed the most deadly vengeance against him. With a fiendish hypocrisy, however, they both concealed their intentions, and Overbury, at the solicitation of Rochester, was appointed ambassador to the court of Russia. This apparent favour was but the first step in a deep and deadly plot. Rochester, pretending to be warmly attached to the interests of Overbury, advised him to refuse the embassy, which, he said, was but a trick to get him out of the way. He promised, at the same time, to stand between him and any evil consequences which might result from his refusal. Overbury fell into the snare, and declined the embassy. James, offended, immediately ordered his committal to the Tower.

He was now in safe custody, and his enemies had opportunity to commence the work of vengeance. The first thing Rochester did was to procure, by his influence at court, the dismissal of the Lieutenant of the Tower, and the appointment of Sir Jervis Elwes, one of his creatures, to the vacant post. This man was but one instrument, and another being necessary, was found in Richard Weston, a fellow who had formerly been shopman to a druggist. He was installed in the office of under-keeper, and as such had the direct custody of Overbury. So far, all was favourable to the designs of the conspirators.

In the mean time, the insidious Rochester wrote the most friendly letters to Overbury, requesting him to bear his ill-fortune patiently, and promising that his imprisonment should not be of long duration; for that his friends were exerting themselves to soften the King's displeasure. Still pretending the extreme of sympathy for him, he followed up the letters by presents of pastry and other delicacies, which could not be procured in the Tower. These articles were all poisoned. Occasionally, presents of a similar description were sent to Sir Jervis Elwes, with the understanding that these articles were not poisoned, when they were unaccompanied by letters:

of these the unfortunate prisoner never tasted. A woman, named Turner, who had formerly kept a house of ill fame, and who had more than once lent it to further the guilty intercourse of Rochester and Lady Essex, was the agent employed to procure the poisons. They were prepared by Dr. Forman, a pretended fortune-teller of Lambeth, assisted by an apothecary named Franklin. Both these persons knew for what purposes the poisons were needed, and employed their skill in mixing them in the pastry and other edibles, in such small quantities as gradually to wear out the constitution of their victim. Mrs. Turner regularly furnished the poisoned articles to the under-keeper, who placed them before Overbury. Not only his food, but his drink was poisoned. Arsenic was mixed with the salt he ate, and cantharides with the pepper. All this time, his health declined sensibly. Every day he grew weaker and weaker; and with a sickly appetite, craved for sweets and jellies. Rochester continued to condole with him, and anticipated all his wants in this respect, sending him abundance of pastry, and occasionally partridges and other game, and young pigs. With the sauce for the game, Mrs. Turner mixed a quantity of cantharides, and poisoned the pork with lunar-caustic. As stated on the trial, Overbury took in this manner poison enough to have poisoned twenty men; but his constitution was strong, and he still lingered. Franklin, the apothecary, confessed that he prepared with Dr. Forman seven different sorts of poisons; viz. aquafortis, arsenic, mercury, powder of diamonds, lunar-caustic, great spiders, and cantharides. Overbury held out so long that Rochester became impatient, and in a letter to Lady Essex, expressed his wonder that things were not sooner despatched. Orders were immediately sent by Lady Essex to the keeper to finish with the victim at once. Overbury had not been all this time without suspicion of treachery, although he appears to have had no idea of poison. He merely suspected that it was intended to confine him for life, and to set the King still more bitterly against him. In one of his letters, he threatened Rochester that, unless he were speedily liberated, he would expose his villany to the world. He says, "You and I, ere it be long, will come to a public trial of another nature." * * * "Drive me not to extremities, lest I should say something that both you and I should repent." * * * "Whether I live or

die, your shame shall never die, but ever remain to the world, to make you the most odious man living." * * * "I wonder much you should neglect him to whom such secrets of all kinds have passed." * * * "Be these the fruits of common secrets, common dangers?"

All these remonstrances, and hints as to the dangerous secrets in his keeping, were ill-calculated to serve him with a man so reckless as Lord Rochester: they were more likely to cause him to be sacrificed than to be saved. Rochester appears to have acted as if he thought so. He doubtless employed the murderer's reasoning that "dead men tell no tales," when, after receiving letters of this description, he complained to his paramour of the delay. Weston was spurred on to consummate the atrocity; and the patience of all parties being exhausted, a dose of corrosive sublimate was administered to him, in October 1613, which put an end to his sufferings, after he had been for six months in their hands. On the very day of his death, and before his body was cold, he was wrapped up carelessly in a sheet, and buried without any funeral ceremony in a pit within the precincts of the Tower.

Sir Anthony Weldon, in his "Court and Character of James I.," gives a somewhat different account of the closing scene of this tragedy. He says, "Franklin and Weston came into Overbury's chamber, and found him in infinite torment, with contention between the strength of nature and the working of the poison; and it being very like that nature had gotten the better in this contention, by the thrusting out of boils, blotches, and blains, they, fearing it might come to light by the judgment of physicians, the foul play that had been offered him, consented to stifle him with the bedclothes, which accordingly was performed; and so ended his miserable life, with the assurance of the conspirators that he died by the poison; none thinking otherwise than these two murderers."

The sudden death—the indecent haste of the funeral, and the non-holding of an inquest upon the body, strengthened the suspicions that were afloat. Rumour, instead of whispering, began to speak out; and the relatives of the deceased openly expressed their belief that their kinsman had been murdered. But Rochester was still all-powerful at court, and no one dared to utter a word to his discredit. Shortly afterwards, his marriage with the Countess of Essex was celebrated

with the utmost splendour, the King himself being present at the ceremony.

It would seem that Overbury's knowledge of James's character was deeper than Rochester had given him credit for, and that he had been a true prophet when he predicted that his marriage would eventually estrange James from his minion. At this time, however, Rochester stood higher than ever in the royal favour; but it did not last long—conscience, that busy monitor, was at work. The tongue of rumour was never still; and Rochester, who had long been a guilty, became at last a wretched man. His cheeks lost their colour—his eyes grew dim; and he became moody, careless, and melancholy. The King seeing him thus, took at length no pleasure in his society, and began to look about for another favourite. George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, was the man to his mind; quick-witted, handsome, and unscrupulous. The two latter qualities alone were sufficient to recommend him to James I. In proportion as the influence of Rochester declined, that of Buckingham increased. A falling favourite has no friends; and Rumour wagged her tongue against Rochester louder and more pertinaciously than ever. A new favourite, too, generally endeavours to hasten by a kick the fall of the old one; and Buckingham, anxious to work the complete ruin of his forerunner in the King's good graces, encouraged the relatives of Sir Thomas Overbury to prosecute their inquiries into the strange death of their kinsman.

James was rigorous enough in the punishment of offences when he was not himself involved. He piqued himself, moreover, on his dexterity in unravelling mysteries. The affair of Sir Thomas Overbury found him congenial occupation. He set to work by ordering the arrest of Sir Jervis Elwes. James, at this early stage of the proceedings, does not seem to have been aware that Rochester was so deeply implicated. Struck with horror at the atrocious system of slow poisoning, the King sent for all the Judges. According to Sir Anthony Weldon, he knelt down in the midst of them, and said, "My Lords the Judges, it is lately come to my hearing that you have now in examination a business of poisoning. Lord! in what a miserable condition shall this kingdom be (the only famous nation for hospitality in the world) if our tables should become such a snare, as that none could eat without danger of

life, and that Italian custom should be introduced among us! Therefore, my Lords, I charge you, as you will answer it at that great and dreadful day of judgment, that you examine it strictly, without favour, affection, or partiality. And if you shall spare any guilty of this crime, God's curse light on you and your posterity! and if I spare any that are guilty, God's curse light on me and my posterity for ever!"

The imprecation fell but too surely upon the devoted house of Stuart. The solemn oath was broken, and God's curse *did* light upon him and his posterity!

The next person arrested after Sir Jervis Elwes, was Weston, the under-keeper; then Franklin and Mrs. Turner; and, lastly, the Earl and Countess of Somerset, to which dignity Rochester had been advanced since the death of Overbury.

Weston was first brought to trial. Public curiosity was on the stretch. Nothing else was talked of, and the court on the day of trial was crowded to suffocation. The "State Trials" report, that Lord Chief Justice Coke "laid open to the jury the baseness and cowardliness of poisoners, who attempt that secretly against which there is no means of preservation or defence for a man's life; and how rare it was to hear of any poisoning in England, so detestable it was to our nation. But the devil had taught divers to be cunning in it, so that they can poison in what distance of space they please, by consuming the *nativum calidum*, or *humidum radicale*, in one month, two or three, or more, as they list, which they four manner of ways do execute; viz., *haustu*, *gustu*, *odore*, and *contactu*."

When the indictment was read over, Weston made no other reply than, "Lord have mercy upon me! Lord have mercy upon me!" On being asked how he would be tried, he refused to throw himself upon a jury of his country, and declared, that he would be tried by God alone. In this he persisted for some time. The fear of the dreadful punishment for contumacy*

* The punishment for the contumacious was expressed by the words *onere*, *frigore*, *et fame*. By the first was meant that the culprit should be extended on his back on the ground, and weights placed over his body, gradually increased, until he expired. Sometimes the punishment was not extended to this length, and the victim, being allowed to recover, underwent the second portion, the *frigore*, which consisted in his standing naked in the open air, for a certain space, in the sight of all the people. The third, or *fame*, was more dreadful, the statute saying, "That he was to be preserved

induced him, at length, to plead "Not guilty," and take his trial in due course of law.

All the circumstances against him were fully proved, and he was found guilty and executed at Tyburn. Mrs. Turner, Franklin, and Sir Jervis Elwes were also brought to trial, found guilty, and executed between the 19th of October and the 4th of December, 1615; but the grand trial of the Earl and Countess of Somerset did not take place till the month of May following.

On the trial of Sir Jervis Elwes, circumstances had transpired, showing a guilty knowledge of the poisoning on the part of the Earl of Northampton the uncle of Lady Somerset, and the chief falconer Sir Thomas Monson. The former was dead; but Sir Thomas Monson was arrested, and brought to trial. It appeared, however, that he was too dangerous a man to be brought to the scaffold. He knew too many of the odious secrets of James I., and his dying speech might contain disclosures which would compromise the King. To conceal old guilt it was necessary to incur new: the trial of Sir Thomas Monson was brought to an abrupt conclusion, and himself set at liberty!

Already James had broken his oath. He now began to fear that he had been rash in engaging so zealously to bring the poisoners to punishment. That Somerset would be declared guilty there was no doubt, and that he looked for pardon and impunity was equally evident to the King. Somerset, while in the Tower, asserted confidently, that James would not *dare* to bring him to trial. In this he was mistaken; but James was in an agony. What the secret was between them will now never be known with certainty; but it may be surmised. Some have imagined it to be the vice to which the King was addicted; while others have asserted, that it related to the death of Prince Henry, a virtuous young man, who had held Somerset in especial abhorrence. The Prince died early, unlamented by his father, and, as public opinion whispered at the time, poisoned by Somerset. Probably, some crime or other lay heavy upon the soul of the King; and

with the coarsest bread that could be got, and water out of the next sink or puddle, to the place of execution; and that day he had water he should have no bread, and that day he had bread, he should have no water;" and in this torment he was to linger as long as nature would hold out.

Somerset, his accomplice, could not be brought to public execution with safety. Hence the dreadful tortures of James, when he discovered that his favourite was so deeply implicated in the murder of Overbury. Every means was taken by the agonized King to bring the prisoner into what was called a safe frame of mind. He was secretly advised to plead guilty, and trust to the clemency of the King. The same advice was conveyed to the Countess. Bacon was instructed by the King to draw up a paper of all the points of "mercy and favour" to Somerset which might result from the evidence; and Somerset was again recommended to plead guilty, and promised that no evil should ensue to him.

The Countess was first tried. She trembled and shed tears during the reading of the indictment, and, in a low voice, pleaded guilty. On being asked why sentence of death should not be passed against her, she replied meekly, "I can much aggravate, but nothing extenuate my fault. I desire mercy, and that the lords will intercede for me with the King." Sentence of death was passed upon her.

Next day the Earl was brought to trial. He appears to have mistrusted the promises of James, and he pleaded not guilty. With a self-possession and confidence, which he felt, probably, from his knowledge of the King's character, he rigorously cross-examined the witnesses, and made a stubborn defence. After a trial which lasted eleven hours, he was found guilty, and condemned to the felon's death.

Whatever may have been the secrets between the criminal and the King, the latter, notwithstanding his terrific oath, was afraid to sign the death-warrant. It might, perchance, have been his own. The Earl and Countess were committed to the Tower, where they remained for nearly five years. At the end of this period, to the surprise and scandal of the community, and the disgrace of its chief magistrate, they both received the royal pardon, but were ordered to reside at a distance from the court. Having been found guilty of felony, the estates of the Earl had become forfeited; but James granted him out of their revenues an income of 4,000*l.* per annum! Shamelessness could go no further.

Of the after life of these criminals nothing is known, except that the love they had formerly borne each other was changed

into aversion, and that they lived under the same roof for months together without the interchange of a word.

The exposure of their atrocities did not put a stop to the practice of poisoning. On the contrary, as we shall see hereafter, it engendered that insane imitation which is so strange a feature of the human character. James himself is supposed, with great probability, to have fallen a victim to it. In the notes to "Harris's Life and Writings of James I.," there is a good deal of information on the subject. The guilt of Buckingham, although not fully established, rests upon circumstances of suspicion stronger than have been sufficient to lead hundreds to the scaffold. His motives for committing the crime are stated to have been a desire of revenge for the coldness with which the King, in the latter years of his reign, began to regard him; his fear that James intended to degrade him; and his hope that the great influence he possessed over the mind of the heir-apparent would last through a new reign, if the old one were brought to a close.

In the second volume of the "Harleian Miscellany," there is a tract, entitled the "Forerunner of Revenge," written by George Eglisham, doctor of medicine, and one of the physicians to King James. Harris, in quoting it, says it is full of rancour and prejudice. It is evidently exaggerated; but forms, nevertheless, a link in the chain of evidence. Eglisham says: "The King being sick of an ague, the Duke took this opportunity, when all the King's doctors of physic were at dinner, and offered to him a white powder to take, the which he a long time refused; but, overcome with his flattering importunity, he took it in wine, and immediately became worse and worse, falling into many swoonings and pains, and violent fluxes of the belly, so tormented, that his Majesty cried out aloud of this white powder, 'Would to God I had never taken it!'" He then tells us "Of the Countess of Buckingham (the Duke's mother) applying the plaster to the King's heart and breast, whereupon he grew faint and short-breathed, and in agony. That the physicians exclaimed, that the King was poisoned; that Buckingham commanded them out of the room, and committed one of them close prisoner to his own chamber, and another to be removed from court; and that, after his Majesty's death, his body and head swelled above measure; his hair, with the skin of his head, stuck to his pillow, and his nails

became loose on his fingers and toes." Clarendon, who, by the way, was a partisan of the Duke's, gives a totally different account of James's death. He says, "It was occasioned by an ague (after a short indisposition by the gout) which, meeting many humours in a fat unwieldy body of fifty-eight years old, in four or five fits carried him out of the world. After whose death many scandalous and libellous discourses were raised, without the least colour or ground; as appeared upon the strictest and most malicious examination that could be made, long after, in a time of license, when nobody was afraid of offending majesty, and when prosecuting the highest reproaches and contumelies against the royal family was held very meritorious." Notwithstanding this confident declaration, the world will hardly be persuaded that there was not some truth in the rumours that were abroad. The inquiries which were instituted were not strict, as he asserts, and all the unconstitutional influence of the powerful favourite was exerted to defeat them. In the celebrated accusations brought against Buckingham by the Earl of Bristol, the poisoning of King James was placed last on the list, and the pages of history bear evidence of the summary mode in which they were, for the time, got rid of.

The man from whom Buckingham is said to have procured his poisons was one Dr. Lamb, a conjuror and empiric, who, besides dealing in poisons, pretended to be a fortune-teller. The popular fury, which broke with comparative harmlessness against his patron, was directed against this man, until he could not appear with safety in the streets of London. His fate was melancholy. Walking one day in Cheapside, disguised, as he thought, from all observers, he was recognised by some idle boys, who began to hoot and pelt him with rubbish, calling out, "The poisoner! the poisoner! Down with the wizard! down with him!" A mob very soon collected, and the Doctor took to his heels and ran for his life. He was pursued and seized in Wood Street, and from thence dragged by the hair through the mire to St. Paul's Cross; the mob beating him with sticks and stones, and calling out, "Kill the wizard! kill the poisoner!"

Charles I., on hearing of the riot, rode from Whitehall to quell it; but he arrived too late to save the victim. Every bone in his body was broken, and he was quite dead. Charles was

excessively indignant, and fined the city six hundred pounds for its inability to deliver up the ringleaders to justice.

But it was in Italy that poisoning was most prevalent. From a very early period, it seems to have been looked upon in that country as a perfectly justifiable means of getting rid of an enemy. The Italians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries poisoned their opponents with as little compunction as an Englishman of the present day brings an action at law against any one who has done him an injury. The writings of contemporary authors informs us that, when La Spara and La Tophania carried on their infernal trade, ladies put poison-bottles on their dressing-tables as openly, and used them with as little scruple upon others, as modern dames use *Eau de Cologne* or lavender-water upon themselves. So powerful is the influence of fashion, it can even cause murder to be regarded as a venial peccadillo.

In the memoirs of the last Duke of Guise, who made a Quixotic attempt, in 1648, to seize upon the government of Naples, we find some curious particulars relative to the popular feeling with regard to poisoning. A man, named Gennaro Annese, who, after the short and extraordinary career of Masaniello the fisherman, had established himself a sort of captain-general of the populace, rendered himself so obnoxious to the Duke of Guise that the adherents of the latter determined to murder him. The captain of the guard, as the Duke himself very coolly informs us, was requested to undertake this office. It was suggested to him that the *poniard* would be the most effectual instrument, but the man turned up his eyes with pious horror at the proposition. He was ready to *poison* Gennaro Annese whenever he might be called upon to do so; but to poniard him, he said, would be disgraceful, and unbecoming an officer of the guard! At last poison was agreed upon, and Augustino Molla, an attorney in the Duke's confidence, brought the bottle containing the liquid to show it to his master. The following is the Duke's own account:—

"Augustino came to me at night, and told me: 'I have brought you something which will free you from Gennaro. He deserves death, and it is no great matter after what fashion justice is done upon him. Look at this vial, full of clear and beautiful water: in four days' time, it will punish all his treasons. The captain of the guard has undertaken to give it to

him, and as it has no taste at all, Gennaro will suspect nothing.'"

The Duke further informs us that the dose was duly administered; but that Gennaro, fortunately for himself, ate nothing for dinner that day but cabbage dressed with oil, which acting as an antidote, caused him to vomit profusely, and saved his life. He was exceedingly ill for five days, but never suspected that he had been poisoned.

In process of time, poison vending became a profitable trade. Eleven years after this period, it was carried on at Rome to such an extent that the sluggish government was roused to interference. Beckmann, in his "History of Inventions," and Lebret, in his "*Magazin zum Gebrauche der Staaten Kirche Geschichte*," or Magazine of Materials for a History of a State Church, relates that, in the year 1659, it was made known to Pope Alexander VII. that great numbers of young women had avowed in the confessional that they had poisoned their husbands with slow poisons. The Catholic clergy, who in general hold the secrets of the confessional so sacred, were shocked and alarmed at the extraordinary prevalence of the crime. Although they refrained from revealing the names of the penitents, they conceived themselves bound to apprise the head of the church of the enormities that were practised. It was also the subject of general conversation at Rome that young widows were unusually abundant. It was remarked, too, that if any couple lived unhappily together, the husband soon took ill and died. The papal authorities, when once they began to inquire, soon learned that a society of young wives had been formed, and met nightly, for some mysterious purpose, at the house of an old woman named Hieronyma Spara. This hag was a reputed witch and fortune-teller, and acted as president of the young viragos, several of whom, it was afterwards ascertained, belonged to the first families of Rome. In order to have positive evidence of the practices of this female conclave, a lady was employed by the Government to seek an interview with them. She dressed herself out in the most magnificent style; and having been amply provided with money, she found but little difficulty, when she had stated her object, of procuring an audience of La Spara and her sisterhood. She pretended to be in extreme distress of mind on account of the infidelities and ill-treatment of her husband,

and implored La Spara to furnish her with a few drops of the wonderful elixir, the efficacy of which in sending cruel husbands to "their last long sleep" was so much vaunted by the ladies of Rome. La Spara fell into the snare, and sold her some of her "drops," at a price commensurate with the supposed wealth of the purchaser.

The liquor thus obtained was subjected to an analysis, and found to be, as was suspected, a slow poison—clear, tasteless, and limpid, like that spoken of by the Duke of Guise. Upon this evidence the house was surrounded by the police, and La Spara and her companions taken into custody. La Spara, who is described as having been a little, ugly, old woman, was put to the torture, but obstinately refused to confess her guilt. Another of the women, named La Gratiosa, had less firmness, and laid bare all the secrets of the infernal sisterhood. Taking a confession, extorted by anguish on the rack, at its true value (nothing at all), there is still sufficient evidence to warrant posterity in the belief of their guilt. They were found guilty, and condemned, according to their degrees of culpability, to various punishments. La Spara, Gratiosa, and three young women, who had poisoned their husbands, were hanged together at Rome. Upwards of thirty women were whipped publicly through the streets; and several, whose high rank screened them from more degrading punishment, were banished from the country, and mulcted in heavy fines. In a few months afterwards, nine women more were hanged for poisoning; and another bevy, including many young and beautiful girls, were whipped half naked through the streets of Rome.

This severity did not put a stop to the practice, and jealous women and avaricious men, anxious to step into the inheritance of fathers, uncles, or brothers, resorted to poison. As it was quite free from taste, colour, and smell, it was administered without exciting suspicion. The skilful vendors compounded it of different degrees of strength, so that the poisoners had only to say whether they wanted their victims to die in a week, a month, or six months, and they were suited with corresponding doses. The vendors were chiefly women, of whom the most celebrated was a hag, named Tophania, who was in this way accessory to the death of upwards of six hundred persons. This woman appears to have been a dealer in poisons from

her girlhood, and resided first at Palermo and then at Naples. That entertaining traveller, Father Lebat, has given, in his Letters from Italy, many curious particulars relating to her. When he was at Civita Vecchia, in 1719, the Viceroy of Naples discovered that poison was extensively sold in the latter city, and that it went by the name of *aqueta*, or little-water. On making further inquiry, he ascertained that Tophania (who was by this time near seventy years of age, and who seems to have begun her evil courses very soon after the execution of La Spara) sent large quantities of it to all parts of Italy in small vials, with the inscription "Manna of St. Nicholas of Barri."

The tomb of St. Nicholas of Barri was celebrated throughout Italy. A miraculous oil was said to ooze from it, which cured nearly all the maladies that flesh is heir to, provided the recipient made use of it with the due degree of *faith*. La Tophania artfully gave this name to her poison to elude the vigilance of the custom-house officers, who, in common with everybody else, had a pious respect for St. Nicholas de Barri and his wonderful oil.

The poison was similar to that manufactured by La Spara. Hahnemann, the physician, and father of the homœopathic doctrine, writing upon this subject, says it was compounded of arsenical neutral salts, occasioning in the victim a gradual loss of appetite, faintness, gnawing pains in the stomach, loss of strength, and wasting of the lungs. The Abbé Gagliardi says that a few drops of it were generally poured into tea, chocolate, or soup, and its effects were slow, and almost imperceptible. Garelli, physician to the Emperor of Austria, in a letter to Hoffmann, says it was crystallized arsenic, dissolved in a large quantity of water by decoction, with the addition (for some unexplained purpose) of the herb *cymbalaria*. The Neapolitans called it *Aqua Toffnina;* and it became notorious all over Europe under the name of *Aqua Tophania*.

Although this woman carried on her infamous traffic so extensively, it was extremely difficult to meet with her. She lived in continual dread of discovery. She constantly changed her name and residence; and pretending to be a person of great godliness, resided in monasteries for months together. Whenever she was more than usually apprehensive of detection,

she sought ecclesiastical protection. She was soon apprised of the search made for her by the Viceroy of Naples, and, according to her practice, took refuge in a monastery. Either the search after her was not very rigid, or her measures were exceedingly well taken; for she contrived to elude the vigilance of the authorities for several years. What is still more extraordinary, as showing the ramifications of her system, her trade was still carried on to as great an extent as before. Lebat informs us that she had so great a sympathy for poor wives who hated their husbands and wanted to get rid of them, but could not afford to buy her wonderful *aqua*, that she made them presents of it.

She was not allowed, however, to play at this game for ever; she was at length discovered in a nunnery, and her retreat cut off. The Viceroy made several representations to the superior to deliver her up, but without effect. The abbess, supported by the archbishop of the diocese, constantly refused. The public curiosity was in consequence so much excited at the additional importance thus thrust upon the criminal, that thousands of persons visited the nunnery in order to catch a glimpse of her.

The patience of the Viceroy appears to have been exhausted by these delays. Being a man of sense, and not a very zealous Catholic, he determined that even the Church should not shield a criminal so atrocious. Setting the privileges of the nunnery at defiance, he sent a troop of soldiers, who broke over the walls and carried her away *vi et armis*. The Archbishop, Cardinal Pignatelli, was highly indignant, and threatened to excommunicate and lay the whole city under interdict. All the inferior clergy, animated by the *esprit du corps*, took up the question, and so worked upon the superstitious and bigoted people, that they were ready to rise in a mass to storm the palace of the Viceroy and rescue the prisoner.

These were serious difficulties; but the Viceroy was not a man to be daunted. Indeed, he seems to have acted throughout with a rare union of astuteness, coolness, and energy. To avoid the evil consequences of the threatened excommunication, he placed a guard round the palace of the Archbishop, judging that the latter would not be so foolish as to launch out an anathema which would cause the city to be starved and himself in it. The market-people would not have dared to come

to the city with provisions, so long as it remained under the ban. There would have been too much inconvenience to himself and his ghostly brethren in such a measure; and, as the Viceroy anticipated, the good Cardinal reserved his thunders for some other occasion.

Still there was the populace. To quiet their clamour and avert the impending insurrection, the agents of the government adroitly mingled with the people, and spread abroad a report that Tophania had poisoned all the wells and fountains of the city. This was enough. The popular feeling turned against her immediately. Those who, but a moment before, had looked upon her as a saint, now reviled her as a devil, and were as eager for her punishment as they had before been for her escape. Tophania was then put to the torture. She confessed the long catalogue of her crimes, and named all the persons who had employed her. She was shortly afterwards strangled, and her corpse thrown over the wall into the garden of the convent, from whence she had been taken. This appears to have been done to conciliate the clergy, by allowing them, at least, the burial of one who had taken refuge within their precincts.

After her death the mania for poisoning seems to have abated; but we have yet to see what hold it took upon the French people at a somewhat earlier period. So rooted had it become in France between the years 1670 and 1680, that Madame de Sevigné, in one of her letters, expresses her fear that Frenchman and poisoner would become synonymous terms.

As in Italy, the first notice the government received of the prevalence of this crime was given by the clergy, to whom females of high rank, and some among the middle and lower classes, had avowed in the confessional that they had poisoned their husbands. In consequence of these disclosures, two Italians, named Exili and Glaser, were arrested, and thrown into the Bastille, on the charge of compounding and selling the drugs used for these murders. Glaser died in prison, but Exili remained without trial for several months; and there, shortly afterwards, he made the acquaintance of another prisoner, named Sainte Croix, by whose example the crime was still further disseminated among the French people.

The most notorious of the poisoners that derived their

pernicious knowledge from this man was Madame de Brinvilliers, a young woman connected both by birth and marriage with some of the noblest families of France. She seems, from her very earliest years, to have been heartless and depraved; and, if we may believe her own confession, was steeped in wickedness ere she had well entered her teens. She was, however, beautiful and accomplished; and, in the eye of the world, seemed exemplary and kind. Guyot de Pitaval, in the "Causes Célèbres," and Madame de Sevigné, in her Letters, represent her as mild and agreeable in her manners, and offering no traces on her countenance of the evil soul within. She was married in 1651 to the Marquis de Brinvilliers, with whom she lived unhappily for some years. He was a loose, dissipated character, and was the means of introducing Sainte Croix to his wife, a man who cast a blight upon her life, and dragged her on from crime to crime till her offences became so great that the mind shudders to dwell upon them. For this man she conceived a guilty passion, to gratify which she plunged at once into the gulf of sin. She was drawn to its most loathsome depths ere retribution overtook her.

She had as yet shown a fair outside to the world, and found but little difficulty in effecting a legal separation from her husband, who had not the art to conceal his vices. The proceeding gave great offence to her family. She appears, after this, to have thrown off the mask completely, and carried on her intrigues so openly with her lover, Sainte Croix, that her father, M. D'Aubray, scandalized at her conduct, procured a *lettre de cachet*, and had him imprisoned in the Bastille for a twelvemonth.

Sainte Croix, who had been in Italy, was a dabbler in poisons. He knew something of the secrets of the detestable La Spara, and improved himself in them from the instructions of Exili, with whom he speedily contracted a sort of friendship. By him he was shown how to prepare, not only the liquid poisons employed in Italy, but that known as *succession powder*, which afterwards became so celebrated in France. Like his mistress, he appeared amiable, witty, and intelligent, and showed no signs to the world of the two fierce passions, revenge and avarice, which were gnawing at his heart. Both these passions were to be sated on the unfortunate family of D'Aubray; his revenge, because they had imprisoned him;

and his avarice, because they were rich. Reckless and extravagant, he was always in want of money, and he had no one to supply him but Madame de Brinvilliers, whose own portion was far from sufficient to satisfy his need. Groaning to think that any impediment should stand between him and wealth, he conceived the horrid idea of poisoning M. D'Aubray her father, and her two brothers, that she might inherit the property. Three murders were nothing to such a villain. He communicated his plan to Madame de Brinvilliers; and she, without the slightest scruple, agreed to aid him: he undertook to compound the poisons, and she to administer them. The zeal and alacrity with which she set to work seem hardly credible. Sainte Croix found her an apt scholar; and she soon became as expert as himself in the manufacture of poisons. To try the strength of the first doses, she used to administer them to dogs, rabbits, and pigeons. Afterwards, wishing to be more certain of their effects, she went round to the hospitals, and administered them to the sick poor in the soups which she brought in apparent charity.* None of the poisons were intended to kill at the first dose; so that she could try them once upon an individual without fear of murder. She tried the same atrocious experiment upon the guests at her father's table, by poisoning a pigeon-pie! To be more certain still, she next poisoned herself! When convinced by this desperate essay of the potency of the draught, she procured an antidote from Sainte Croix, and all doubts being removed, commenced operations upon her gray-headed father. She administered the first dose with her own hands, in his chocolate. The poison worked well. The old man was taken ill, and his daughter, apparently full of tenderness and anxiety, watched by his bedside. The next day she gave him some broth, which she recommended as highly nourishing. This also was poisoned. In this manner she gradually wore out his frame, and in less than ten days he was a corpse! His death seemed so much the result of disease that no suspicions were excited.

* This is denied by Voltaire in his "Age of Louis XIV.;" but he does not state for what reason. His words are, "Il est faux qu'elle eut essayé ses poisons dans les hôpitaux, comme le disait le peuple et comme il est écrit dans les 'Causes Célèbres,' ouvrage d'un avocat sans cause et fait pour le peuple."

When the two brothers arrived from the provinces to render the last sad duties to their sire, they found their sister as grieved, to all outward appearance, as even filial affection could desire: but the young men only came to perish. They stood between Sainte Croix and the already half-clutched gold, and their doom was sealed. A man, named La Chaussée, was hired by Sainte Croix to aid in administering the poisons; and, in less than six weeks' time, they had both gone to their long home.

Suspicion was now excited; but so cautiously had all been done, that it found no one upon whom to attach itself. The Marquise had a sister, and she was entitled, by the death of her relatives, to half the property. Less than the whole would not satisfy Sainte Croix, and he determined that she should die the same death as her father and brothers. She was too distrustful, however; and, by quitting Paris, she escaped the destruction that was lurking for her.

The Marquise had undertaken these murders to please her lover. She was now anxious to perpetrate another on her own account. She wished to marry Sainte Croix; but, though separated from her husband, she was not divorced. She thought it would be easier to poison him than to apply to the tribunals for a divorce, which might, perhaps, be refused. But Sainte Croix had no longer any love for his guilty instrument. Bad men do not admire others who are as bad as themselves. Though a villain himself, he had no desire to marry one, and was not at all anxious for the death of the Marquis. He seemed, however, to enter into the plot, and supplied her with poison for her husband: but he took care to provide a remedy. La Brinvilliers poisoned him one day, and Sainte Croix gave him an antidote the next. In this manner he was buffetted about between them for some time, and finally escaped with a ruined constitution and a broken heart.

But the day of retribution was at hand, and a terrible mischance brought the murders to light. The nature of the poisons compounded by Sainte Croix was so deadly, that, when working in his laboratory, he was obliged to wear a mask, to preserve himself from suffocation. One day, the mask slipped off, and the miserable wretch perished in his crimes. His corpse was found, on the following morning, in the obscure lodging where he had fitted up his laboratory.

As he appeared to be without friends or relatives, the police took possession of his effects. Among other things was found a small box, to which was affixed the following singular document:—

"I humbly beg, that those into whose hands this box may fall, will do me the favour to deliver it into the hands only of the Marchioness de Brinvilliers, who resides in the Rue Neuve St. Paul, as everything it contains concerns her, and belongs to her alone; and as, besides, there is nothing in it that can be of use to any person but her. In case she shall be dead before me, it is my wish that it be burned, with everything it contains, without opening or altering anything. In order that no one may plead ignorance, I swear by the God that I adore, and by all that is held most sacred, that I assert nothing but the truth: and if my intentions, just and reasonable as they are, be thwarted in this point by any persons, I charge their consciences with it, both in this world and that which is to come, in order that I may unload mine. I protest that this is my last will. Done at Paris, the 25th of May, 1672.

(Signed) "Sainte Croix."

This earnest solicitation, instead of insuring respect as was intended, excited curiosity. The box was opened, and found to contain some papers, and several vials and powders. The latter were handed to a chemist for analysis, and the documents were retained by the police, and opened. Among them was found a promissory note of the Marchioness de Brinvilliers, for thirty thousand francs, to the order of Sainte Croix. The other papers were of greater importance, as they implicated both her and her servant, La Chaussée, in the recent murders. As soon as she was informed of the death of Sainte Croix, she made an attempt to gain possession of his papers and the box; but, being refused, she saw there was no time to be lost, and immediately quitted. Next morning the police were on her trail; but she succeeded in escaping to England. La Chaussée was not so fortunate. Altogether ignorant of the fatal mischance which had brought his villanies to light, he did not dream of danger. He was arrested and brought to trial: being put to the torture, he confessed that he had administered poison to the Messieurs

d'Aubray, that he had received a hundred pistoles, and the promise of an annuity for life, from Sainte Croix and Madame de Brinvilliers, for the job. He was condemned to be broken alive on the wheel, and the Marchioness was, by default, sentenced to be beheaded. He was executed accordingly, in March, 1673, on the Place de Grève, in Paris.

La Brinvilliers appears to have resided for nearly three years in England. Early in 1676, thinking that the rigour of pursuit was over, and that she might venture to return to the Continent, she proceeded secretly to Liège. Notwithstanding her care, the French authorities were soon apprised of her return; and arrangements were promptly made with the municipality of that city, to permit the agents of the French police to arrest her within the limits of their jurisdiction. Desgrais, an officer of the *marechaussée*, accordingly left Paris for that purpose. On his arrival in Liège, he found that she had sought shelter within the walls of a convent. Here the arm of the law, long as it is said to be, could not reach her; but Desgrais was not a man to be baffled, and he resorted to stratagem to accomplish what force could not. Having disguised himself as a priest, he sought admission to the convent, and obtained an interview with La Brinvilliers. He said, that being a Frenchman, and passing through Liège, he could not leave that city without paying a visit to a lady whose beauty and misfortunes were so celebrated. Her vanity was flattered by the compliment. Desgrais saw, to use a vulgar, but forcible expression, "that he had got on the blind side of her;" and he adroitly continued to pour out the language of love and admiration, till the deluded Marchioness was thrown completely off her guard. She agreed, without much solicitation, to meet him outside the walls of the convent, where their amorous intrigue might be carried on more conveniently than within. Faithful to her appointment with her supposed new lover, she came, and found herself, not in the embrace of a gallant, but in the custody of a policeman.

Her trial was not long delayed. The proofs against her were abundant. The dying declaration of La Chaussée would have been alone enough to convict her; but besides that, there were the mysterious document attached to the box of Sainte Croix; her flight from France; and, stronger and more damning proof than all, a paper, in her own handwriting, found among the effects of Sainte Croix, in which she detailed

to him the misdeeds of her life, and spoke of the murder of her father and brothers, in terms that left no doubt of her guilt. During the trial, all Paris was in commotion. La Brinvilliers was the only subject of conversation. All the details of her crimes were published and greedily devoured; and the idea of secret poisoning was first put into the heads of hundreds, who afterwards became guilty of it.

On the 16th of July 1676, the Superior Criminal Court of Paris pronounced a verdict of guilty against her, for the murder of her father and brothers, and the attempt upon the life of her sister. She was condemned to be drawn on a hurdle, with her feet bare, a rope about her neck, and a burning torch in her hand, to the great entrance of the cathedral of Notre Dame; where she was to make the *amende honorable*, in sight of all the people; to be taken from thence to the Place de Grève, and there to be beheaded. Her body was afterwards to be burned, and her ashes scattered to the winds.

After her sentence, she made a full confession of her guilt. She seems to have looked upon death without fear; but it was recklessness, not courage, that supported her. Madame de Sevigné says, that when on the hurdle, on her way to the scaffold, she entreated her confessor to exert his influence with the executioner to place himself next to her, that his body might hide from her view "that scoundrel, Desgrais, who had entrapped her." She also asked the ladies who had been drawn to their windows to witness the procession, what they were looking at? adding, "a pretty sight you have come to see, truly!" She laughed when on the scaffold, dying as she had lived, impenitent and heartless. On the morrow, the populace came in crowds to collect her ashes, to preserve them as relics. She was regarded as a martyred saint, and her ashes were supposed to be endowed, by Divine Grace, with the power of curing all diseases. Popular folly has often canonized persons whose pretensions to sanctity were extremely equivocal; but the disgusting folly of the multitude, in this instance, has never been surpassed.

Before her death, proceedings were instituted against M. de Penautier, treasurer of the province of Languedoc, and Receiver-general for the clergy, who was accused by a lady, named St. Laurent, of having poisoned her husband, the late Receiver-general in order to obtain his appointment. The circumstances of this case were never divulged, and the great-

est influence was exerted to prevent it from going to trial. He was known to have been intimate with Sainte Croix and Madame de Brinvilliers, and was thought to have procured his poisons from them. The latter, however, refused to say anything which might implicate him. The inquiry was eventually stifled, after Penautier had been several months in the Bastille.

The Cardinal de Bonzy was accused by the gossips of the day of being an accomplice of Penautier. The Cardinal's estates were burdened with the payment of several heavy annuities; but about the time that poisoning became so fashionable, all the annuitants died off, one after the other. The Cardinal, in talking of these annuitants, afterwards used to say, "Thanks to my star, I have outlived them all!" A wit seeing him and Penautier riding in the same carriage, cried out, in allusion to this expression, "There go the Cardinal de Bonzy and his *star!*"

It was now that the mania for poisoning began to take hold of the popular mind. From this time until the year 1682, the prisons of France teemed with persons accused of this crime; and it is very singular, that other offences decreased in a similar proportion. We have already seen the extent to which it was carried in Italy. It was, if possible, surpassed in France. The diabolical ease with which these murders could be effected, by means of these scentless and tasteless poisons, enticed the evil-minded. Jealousy, revenge, avarice, even petty spite, alike resorted to them. Those who would have been deterred, by fear of detection, from using the pistol or the dagger, or even strong doses of poison, which kill at once, employed slow poisons without dread. The corrupt government of the day, although it could wink at the atrocities of a wealthy and influential courtier, like Penautier, was scandalized to see the crime spreading among the people. Disgrace was, in fact, entailed, in the eyes of Europe, upon the name of Frenchman. Louis XIV., to put a stop to the evil, instituted what is called the Chambre Ardente, or Burning Chamber, with extensive powers, for the trial and punishment of the prisoners.

Two women, especially, made themselves notorious at this time, and were instrumental to the deaths of hundreds of individuals. They both resided in Paris, and were named Lavoisin and Lavigoreux. Like Spara and Tophania, of whom they were imitators, they chiefly sold their poisons to women

who wanted to get rid of their husbands; and, in some few instances, to husbands who wanted to get rid of their wives. Their ostensible occupation was that of midwives. They also pretended to be fortune-tellers, and were visited by persons of every class of society. The rich and poor thronged alike to their *mansardes*, to learn the secrets of the future. Their prophecies were principally of death. They foretold to women the approaching dissolution of husbands, and to needy heirs, the end of rich relatives, who had made them, as Byron expresses it, "wait too, too long already." They generally took care to be instrumental in fulfilling their own predictions. They used to tell their wretched employers, that some sign of the approaching death would take place in the house, such as the breaking of glass or china; and they paid servants considerable fees to cause a breakage, as if by accident, exactly at the appointed time. Their occupation as midwives made them acquainted with the secrets of many families, which they afterwards turned to dreadful account.

It is not known how long they had carried on this awful trade before they were discovered. Detection finally overtook them at the close of the year 1679. They were both tried, found guilty, and burned alive on the Place de Grève, on the 22d of February, 1680, after their hands had been bored through with a red-hot iron, and then cut off. Their numerous accomplices in Paris and in the provinces were also discovered and brought to trial. According to some authors, thirty, and to others, fifty of them, chiefly women, were hanged in the principal cities.

Lavoisin kept a list of the visiters who came to her house to purchase poisons. This paper was seized by the police on her arrest, and examined by the tribunals. Among the names were found those of the Marshal de Luxembourg, the Countess de Soissons, and the Duchess de Bouillon. The Marshal seems only to have been guilty of a piece of discreditable folly in visiting a woman of this description, but the popular voice at the time imputed to him something more than folly. The author of the "Memoirs of the Affairs of Europe since the Peace of Utrecht," says, "The miserable gang who dealt in poison and prophecy alleged that he had sold himself to the devil, and that a young girl of the name of Dupin had been poisoned by his means. Among other stories, they said he had made a contract with the devil, in order to marry his son

to the daughter of the Marquis of Louvois. To this atrocious and absurd accusation the Marshal, who had surrendered himself at the Bastille on the first accusation against him, replied, with the mingled sentiment of pride and innocence, 'When Mathieu de Montmorenci, my ancestor, married the widow of Louis le Gros, he did not have recourse to the devil, but to the States-General, in order to obtain for the minor king the support of the house of Montmorenci.' This brave man was imprisoned in a cell six feet and a half long, and his trial, which was interrupted for several weeks, lasted altogether fourteen months. No judgment was pronounced upon him."

The Countess of Soissons fled to Brussels, rather than undergo the risk of a trial; and was never able to clear herself from the stigma that attached to her, of having made an attempt to poison the Queen of Spain by doses of succession powder. The Duchess of Bouillon was arrested, and tried by the Chambre Ardente. It would appear, however, that she had nothing to do with the slow poisons, but had merely endeavoured to pry into the secrets of futurity, and gratify her curiosity with a sight of the devil. One of the presidents of the Chambre, La Reynie, an ugly little old man, very seriously asked her whether she had really seen the devil; to which the lady replied, looking him full in the face, "Oh yes! I see him now. He is in the form of a little ugly old man, exceedingly ill-natured, and is dressed in the robes of a counsellor of state." M. la Reynie prudently refrained from asking any more questions of a lady with so sharp and ready a tongue. The Duchess was imprisoned for several months in the Bastille; and nothing being proved against her, she was released at the intercession of her powerful friends. The severe punishment of criminals of this note might have helped to abate the fever of imitation among the vulgar;—their comparative impunity had a contrary tendency. The escape of Penautier, and the wealthy Cardinal de Bonzy his employer, had the most pernicious effect. For two years longer the crime continued to rage, and was not finally suppressed till the stake had blazed, or the noose dangled, for upwards of a hundred individuals.

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But dear memorials of happy days,
When heaven shed blessings on my heart like showers,
Clothing with beauty e'en the desert place;
Till I, with thankful gladness in my looks,
Turned me to God, sweet nature, loving friends,
Christ's little children, well-worn ancient books,
The charm of Art, the rapture music sends;
And sang away the grief that on man's lot attends.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

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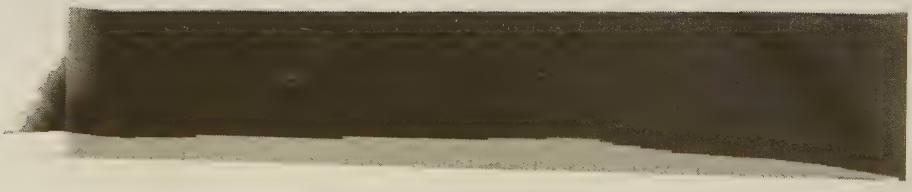

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